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Percy Bysshe Shelley

DANIEL AND THE REVELATION: THE CHART OF PROPHECY, AND OUR PLACE IN IT.

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Percy Bickerton

PREFACE

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable . . . that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Admit that passage as valid, and it follows that no part of Holy Scripture can be left unstudied without distinct and direct loss to the soul. Where all is profitable for growth and spiritual outfit, the neglect of any portion means corresponding diminution of progress and capacity. All Scripture is needed for the full development of the man of God: history, biography, laws, poetry, doctrine, letters—and prophecy.

Now, it is a matter of very general experience that, even in those who are the most regular students of the Bible, the prophetic portions are largely neglected: generally on one of two grounds. Either the inherent difficulty of prophetic writings is alleged as a reason for expecting no profit or results from the study of them; or the widely differing solutions offered by equally earnest interpreters is held as proof that no certain interpretation can be found. But men who put forward these pleas do not use them for other parts of Scripture. Those, too, meet with very diverse treatment, and those, too, have difficulties enough. Yet they are read and used, widely understood and largely employed, in promoting spiritual growth; why then should any earnest Christian soul despair of finding advantage from the study of prophecy?

This book is an honest and reasonable attempt to remove these two objections, and to put a fair solution of the great outlines of prophecy before plain students of the Word. The writer gives us a clear line of interpretation throughout, and brings abundant proof to bear for its acceptance and establishment.

But there is here not only the application of the great "Historical method of interpretation," on the generally accepted lines. Two special particulars give an interest of their own to the study of prophecy as here developed. First, there is fresh light thrown upon the method, gathered with careful study from many quarters, which removes some old objections, fairly meets some old difficulties, and prepares the way for a more ready acceptance of the principle advocated. And, in the second place, the author gives at frequent intervals specimen solutions of opposing methods, mostly in the language of their authors. Any clear-minded reader is thus enabled to compare the conflicting methods at many crucial points, and can decide for himself which to follow.

Another point of particular interest in this volume is, that harsh and wholesale condemnation of opposing theories is not used in substitution for proof and argument. Nay, more, certain conditions are indicated, and certain limits defined, under which some of the anticipations of Futurists with regard to the question of the Antichrist may possibly find a fulfilment. The difference, however, is strongly accentuated between the Futurist principles as a complete solution of the prophetic problem,—a solution which is here rejected,—and the secondary sense, in which the revolutions of the wheel of history may bring round an application on a smaller scale of what has had its grand fulfilment on the larger scale in the past.

One of the prophets of the Old Testament was commanded concerning his prophecy: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it" (Hab. ii. 2). Evidently it was not with the intention of obscuring, but of revealing God's purposes, that the prophecy was given. "Make it plain" was the mark of the prophet's work, and must, above all, be the mark of a useful expounder of prophecy. Just such is the character of this book: it is indeed a successful effort, in dealing with the prophetic Scripture, to "make it plain."

But to gain advantage from the prophecy and the interpretation, another mark is needed in the student: "that he may run that readeth it." Here an order of things is indicated which the popular notions of the day and the popular misquotation of the

text alike conspire to invert. Keble is probably responsible for the universal corruption of the text in daily use, owing to his line: "There is a book, who runs may read." This suits the fancy of the age; a passing glance as you run by will suffice to convey the meaning of the prophet, and is all you need trouble to take. But by such means, and with such a reading, no real good will be gained. Habakkuk was not taught so to write, that the careless runner might easily catch his meaning, but that the careful reader might run with confident steps along the course described. "He may run that readeth it": that means reading first, study and honest labour to grasp the meaning first; then the sure course and the steady footing in life's race. Such, too, is the need to-day for any who would master thoroughly and hold firmly the prophetic teaching of God's Word.

This book is not a magazine article, nor a "short and easy" route by which to gain the end. But for him "that readeth it," with purpose and thought, with diligence and determination, with an open Bible and constant reference to it, it will surely mark out a plain course and give clear directions, by which even simple souls shall run confidently to the end.

On all sides, and in almost all schools of interpretation, there is to-day a widespread expectation of the nearness of the Lord's return. Five great signs are evident in the world, calling for attention from every Christian soul. The Temporal Power of the Pope has gone, and the dominion of Mohammedan rule in the East is going fast: two great signs to which Historical interpreters have for years been looking as tokens of the end of the dispensation. Joined to the latter sign is, further, the ever-growing stream of Jewish immigration into Palestine, making ready the way of the Lord's Return. Whilst in the living Church of Christ are two other tokens: the increasing zeal for missionary effort throughout the world, side by side with earnest pursuit after growth in holiness; both of them marks that the Bride of Christ is being gathered out of all nations, and is making herself ready for His Coming.

This book serves to deepen the conviction, and provides sound arguments for the assurance, that the Second Advent is at hand. Holding strongly to that conviction, and fully assured of its truth,

I am glad warmly to commend this attempt to make it more widely known, and thus to bring a neglected field of view within the discernment of other students of God's Word. May He who gave that Word give also to His living Church seeing eyes to read, hearing ears to understand, and obedient lives to fulfil its teachings. "Whoso readeth, let him understand" (Matt. xxiv. 15).

HUBERT BROOKE.

St. Margaret's Church, Brighton,
22nd March, 1898.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE present volume owes its origin to two papers that were read by the Author before the Prophecy Investigation Society, which, consisting of more than one hundred members, meets twice in the year in London for the purpose of investigating and discussing prophetical questions. Some of those who heard the papers read requested that they might be published. Hence, their substance has been included in this work. The Author especially acknowledges with gratitude the encouragement given to him in this undertaking by the late Sir Arthur Blackwood, who was one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society.

Owing to the shortness of time allowed for reading the papers at these discussions many points had to be left out, or only lightly touched upon. Advantage has therefore been taken of the present opportunity for expanding and revising what the Author was able to say on these occasions. Moreover, since both the Historical and Futurist systems of interpretation are represented in the above-mentioned Prophetical Society, he has been led still further to enlarge the scope of this volume, and to endeavour to present a contrast between these two methods of explaining the prophecies in Daniel and the Revelation, in order to enable general readers to distinguish between the two systems, and to decide for themselves which is the true one. There is, perhaps, no subject in which fallacies, difficult to be detected by the uninitiated, are found more thickly strewn than in books and pamphlets on prophecy.

This volume is intended for those who wish to *study* the subject. Many who are readers of prophecy can scarcely be called *students* of prophecy. They have never fairly examined both sides of the question; but they have, without sufficient care,

adopted the system favoured by the first book or pamphlet which fell into their hands, or which first led them to take an interest in the matter.

Others, when they begin to read about prophecy, are often discouraged. They say: "I take up one book, and it seems to command my assent, and then I take up another, which, confidently asserting quite a different view, seems to me equally probable. Which am I to believe?"

Well, there is no short and easy road to the truth about prophecy. It is not by the reading of pamphlets or isolated papers, or by listening to prophetical addresses on the Antichrist, or some other separate topic, that the subject can be mastered. As in a puzzle-map, if you take up one or two pieces by themselves, and regard them separately, you will be sure to form an incorrect and distorted idea of what they represent—so it is with prophecy. A comprehensive view of the whole question is needed, each part being considered in its relation to the rest, before the true meaning of the prophetic Scriptures can be properly understood, and the right method of interpretation ascertained. People must exercise their mental faculties and weigh evidence for themselves if they wish to be sure that they are on the right lines of interpretation. Surely such a subject as this is worth a little trouble and study in order to discover the truth about it. Indeed, one may well ask, what science or study is more worthy of a Christian's careful attention than that which unfolds God's plans and purposes in the world, and His Divine prescience of the future; and which not only makes us understand the point which we have reached in the course of the present dispensation, and discern the signs of the times in which we are living, but which also reveals to us the nature and order of events in the near and more remote future, some of which we may perhaps live to see.

For more than twenty years the Author has made the subject of prophecy a matter of thought and study. Starting originally on Futurist lines, like many others, he gradually began to suspect the truth of that system of exposition, in consequence of the unsoundness and illogical nature of the arguments brought forward in support of it. Hence he was led to read further, and to

make a comparative study of other systems, and soon became convinced that the long succession of writers, including names of the highest intellect and piety, who, from the time of the Reformers onward, have developed the truth of Historical exposition, were on the right lines of interpretation—a conviction that has only been deepened by further study and experience, and which he trusts the readers of the present volume will share with him. At any rate he would invite them to weigh carefully the evidence here brought forward.

It is highly imprudent to adopt a system as true because it is the first that happens to come before your notice, and it is most unsafe to accept the assertions of many who write and speak upon the subject of prophecy in a most positive manner. It has well been remarked that some who undertake to expound prophecy seem to lay aside the student's gown, and to assume instead the prophet's mantle, writing and speaking in a dogmatic and oracular style, almost as if they had themselves received a revelation.

The present Author has endeavoured not to deserve this criticism. He has made it his aim to give information with regard to both sides of the question. He has sought to bring forward such a weight of authority from writers of the highest eminence, and such clearness of proof appealing to common sense and individual judgment, as to give to readers materials for forming an opinion for themselves, and to enable them not only to arrive at the truth with respect to the right system of interpretation, but also to be on their guard against the fallacies of those writings, in which strength of assertion too often supplies the place of strength of argument.

The subjects of the two papers which were read by the Author before the Prophecy Investigation Society, and which form the basis of the present volume, are (1) the Prophecy of the *Seventy Weeks* in Daniel, and (2) the Meaning of *the Final Head of the Beast* in the Revelation. A consideration of these questions will bring under review some of the most prominent features in the field of prophecy, including the important prediction given by our Lord in mysterious terms upon the Mount of Olives, of which a brief explanation will be given. These may be regarded as

chief land-marks of the prophetical chart. Those who are right upon these points are upon the right lines of interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy generally: whilst error on these crucial questions throws everything else into confusion.

It is hoped that this volume may supply readers with the materials for forming a judgment for themselves upon these fundamental points in the study of prophecy. The scope, however, of the present work, is much wider than this. We shall endeavour to present to our readers an exposition, in more or less detail, of the prophecies in Daniel generally, and, more particularly, of the long series of symbolic visions in the difficult and mysterious book of the Revelation.

Further than this—just as in giving directions to a traveller, who has entered upon a difficult journey, it would be wise, not merely to point out the right direction of the path, but also to caution him against stumbling-blocks or pitfalls that must be avoided, and wrong turnings that might lead astray—so, in such a difficult and debated subject as that of prophecy, it is necessary, in order to establish the true method of interpretation, and to avoid confusion, not only to present a system which is consistent and reasonable, but at the same time to point out the groundlessness of the objections that may be brought against it; and also, side by side with what we hold to be the true explanation, to endeavour to exhibit the mistaken reasoning of the opposing system, and the errors of interpretation to which it leads. This will be found to be a prominent feature in the present work; and, in carrying it out, an explanation will be given of many important and difficult prophecies occurring in various parts of Scripture. Indeed, a point has been made of searching for difficulties with a view to removing them.

The Author, however, trusts that nothing that is said in this book will be considered to overstep the bounds of Christian love and courtesy. For the sake of truth, and to prevent confusion in the study of prophecy, he has felt it necessary to comment upon a certain style of dogmatism too often met with in writings and speeches which relate to prophecy, and upon the unsoundness of some arguments constantly brought forward; since both these causes are likely to lead to error and con-

fusion in the minds of those who take up the subject. At the same time, the Author gives full credit to those from whom he differs, for being equally anxious with himself to put forward truth. To mark the absence of all personal allusion, he has refrained, as a rule, from mentioning the *names* of living authors, referring rather to their writings. If in any case he has himself written in too confident a style, he would ask readers to pardon a failing which he has endeavoured to guard against, and to accept nothing on bare unsupported assertions; but, rather, to weigh the arguments brought forward calmly and without bias, and so to form an intelligent judgment for themselves as to the truth of the interpretation.

It is not easy to point out errors, whether of style or argument, without being accused by those who hold opposing views of exhibiting a spirit of bitterness and controversy. But if such errors are believed to be an obstacle to the reception of truth, and to bring discredit or confusion into the study of God's prophetic Word, it becomes absolutely necessary to notice them. If, in doing so, the present writer may seem to be in any way deficient in the spirit of love towards those from whom he differs, it will not be from want of care and anxiety to avoid any such imputation.

It is especially hoped by the writer that this volume may be a help to his brethren in the ministry, and to all who undertake to unfold the meaning of Scripture. Considering how very large a portion of the Bible is taken up with prophecy, and that a multitude of allusions throughout the Sacred Volume cannot be perfectly understood without a knowledge of the deep meaning of the prophetic writings, it seems strange that the subject should be so widely neglected. Some think it unpractical; but one of the most practical and best known of modern Evangelicals, Mr. Moody, thinks just the opposite, and complains that though "a great part of the Bible was written by prophets, yet one seldom hears a sermon on prophecy. People seem to be afraid of it." Indeed, it is a common observation amongst most congregations that prophetical subjects, especially those set forth in Daniel and the Revelation, are scarcely ever touched upon in the pulpit; and when they are alluded to it is often in a confused, uncertain,

or mistaken way. One reason of this is probably because the time of the ministers of the Gospel is too much occupied to allow them sufficient leisure to examine the many volumes and confusing theories that have been put forth in connection with the subject, and therefore, not feeling sure of what is the truth, they think it wiser to let the subject alone. Yet a distinct blessing is promised in the opening words of the Book of Revelation, to a careful study of apocalyptic prophecy. Circumstances have given the present writer sufficient leisure to examine this difficult and interesting subject, and to compare the various theories of interpretation, and he trusts he has done so with an unbiased mind. It is hoped, therefore, that the present volume, which is the result of many years of study, may be of some assistance to those whose special office it is to unfold the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and to bring out the hidden treasures of His Word.

In the view of Historical interpretation here presented, no one particular expositor has been implicitly followed in every detail. We have preferred to make a comparative study of the best authorities and chief exponents of that system, and at the same time, by further independent investigation, have endeavoured to remove some objections, which have been to many an obstacle in the way of accepting Historical interpretation as the true method. The citation of eminent prophetical commentators, such as Elliot, Alford, and Wordsworth, must not be understood, therefore, as involving assent to every detail of their interpretation of prophecy, though their writings have afforded invaluable assistance. Moreover, it should be mentioned, that in the course of our inquiry proof is not unfrequently drawn from writers who are not in full accord with, or are even opposed to, the views which are here upheld. The admissions of an adverse critic are often amongst the strongest arguments in favour of any particular truth. It is the duty of a writer on prophecy to profit, not only by the right conclusions, but also by the mistakes or deficiencies of those who have preceded him, and thus, if possible, to throw fresh light upon mysterious details, and to clear up doubtful points.

A further reason for offering this volume to the public is, that in these days, when the truth of the Divine inspiration of Scripture is being assailed in various ways on every side, we cannot

afford to lose sight of the proof of inspiration that is given us by the fulfilment of prophecy—a test sanctioned by God Himself (Deuteronomy xviii. 20–22). The marvellous way in which the mysterious foreshadowings in the book of Daniel, and especially in the Revelation, of some of the chief events of this dispensation, have been fulfilled, or are now being fulfilled, is one of the strongest evidences that the Bible has been inspired by Him who knows the end from the beginning.

In order not unduly to increase the size of the volume many important points and illustrations have been compressed, and inserted in the form of footnotes, to which the reader's attention is particularly invited. Moreover, as the subject of prophecy is very complicated, and the memory needs to be continually refreshed on points of detail, many cross-references are given, to enable the reader to compare what is said in connection with any particular point in other parts of the volume.

To avoid misunderstanding, it may be well to add that words enclosed within square brackets, [ ], and inserted in a quotation, are the present writer's comments, not those of the Author quoted.

P.S.—The present volume was written, and in the printer's hands, a year ago; but, when three parts through the revising of the proof sheets for the press, the Author was suddenly laid aside by serious illness. Hence the delay in publication. The remarkable events that have since happened, in connection with Turkey, Egypt, and the Far East, have only served to confirm the anticipations, based upon Scripture prophecy, which the Author ventured to express; and the Jews have shown during the year signs more marked than ever—in the Zionist Congress at Basle, for example—of a drawing together, and a looking with hope towards their own land.

The Author feels deeply indebted to the kindness of a friend, the Rev. E. H. Horne, for the trouble he has taken in completing the task of passing the sheets through the press, and in arranging the Index.

January, 1898.

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INTRODUCTION

In the first place, without going into all the details of divergent methods of prophetical interpretation, it may be well, for the sake of those not previously acquainted with the subject, to mention four different systems which the student of prophecy may find presented to him for acceptance, and between which he must choose.

First there is the *Spiritualising* system, which takes all definite meaning out of the Apocalypse, and regards it as a book describing, in obscure and mystical language, not particular events which were to happen, but merely the *principles* of God's action in the world. Such a vague system as this we believe to be alike uninteresting, unprofitable, and unfounded.

Secondly there is the *Preterist* system, which, through the error of confounding typical events with the great events themselves which these types foreshadowed, holds that the apocalyptic prophecies connected with the coming of Antichrist and of Christ *have already been fulfilled* in the events of the time of Nero and of the destruction of Jerusalem. Without a tittle of evidence some of this school even assert that the Lord Jesus has come for His saints already, and that the first resurrection is past. They announce this as "the greatest theological discovery of the Christian era." They dwell upon such expressions as "a little while" in John xvi. 16, which, as Alford shows, in its ultimate fulfilment refers to our Lord's second advent. They cite from the Revelation, "Behold, I come quickly," "Surely I come quickly," and the words of St. James to the persecuted Christians of his day, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord . . . for the coming of the Lord is at hand," and other passages of similar import. They attempt to force a dilemma by

saying that either our Lord wished to deceive the Apostles, and that they were deceived by Him, or else that He must have come in glory and have raised His saints at a period as near at hand as the destruction of Jerusalem, and that, in fact, He did then so come, though not a trace or tradition of anything of the sort exists. The fallacy of this false dilemma may be shown by various considerations. Our Lord looked at and spoke of the duration of this dispensation as One who knew what eternity means. To Him "a thousand years are as one day," and the interval between His two comings but as "a little while." Moreover, He expressly told His disciples, in answer to their inquiry upon this point, "it is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority." Hence He employed mystery and uncertainty, sometimes speaking of His return as "in a little while," at other times throwing out hints of a long absence, as in the parable of the Talents, where the Lord returned "after a long time," and as again in the parable of the Pounds, where the "nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and return." We find the same feature in apostolic utterances. St. Paul at one time speaks of the Lord's coming as near, possibly in his own lifetime; at another time he speaks of the wolves who, after his departure, would harass the flock of Christ, and seems to imply that the Church had a long and painful experience before her. We shall see, in the course of our inquiry, that the Lord's return will be in two stages. It is specially with regard to the first stage, when He will come into the air to take up His elect, that He wished believers to live in the attitude of uncertainty combined with readiness and expectation. That this is the prescribed attitude of the Christian life is clear from His saying, in Mark xiii., "Watch, therefore: for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

One more passage may be mentioned which these writers make a great deal of in order to prop up their erroneous view, namely, our Lord's words in Matthew xxiv. 34: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be

accomplished" (literally, come to pass or happen). Whence they argue that the second advent and first resurrection must have taken place during the generation living at the time when the words were spoken. Here again they are in error from not understanding the Scriptures, especially prophetic Scripture. It is an accepted principle amongst the highest authorities that many prophecies (not all, as some say, thereby falling into the opposite error) have a twofold fulfilment. It is well shown by Alford and Wordsworth that this is one of them. Just as the Transfiguration was a preliminary or typical picture of the *first* stage of Christ's coming, at the end of this dispensation, namely, when He comes into the air to gather His elect to be with Him in glory, so the destruction of Jerusalem was a typical foreshadowing of His coming to pour out judgment upon the rebellious, which will take place at the *second* stage of His advent. Hence Christ's words in the above-mentioned passage received a *preliminary partial* fulfilment in the time of the "generation" then living; but for the *complete* fulfilment, as Alford and Wordsworth show, we must take the wider meaning of the term, applying it to the whole generation of this dispensation, whether of the Jews, as some explain it, or of believers generally, as others think.

Perhaps we ought not to be surprised at such a strange system of interpretation being put forward, since St. Paul tells us that even in his time there were some who "erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already."[1]

With regard to the two above-mentioned systems, the *Spiritualising* and the *Preterist*, little need be said. They are not prominent in the world. They do not influence religious thought, and the writings of those who advocate them are seldom met with, or talked about, which is nothing else than what might be expected, since they take all practical interest out of the subject of prophecy.

But with regard to the other two systems, the *Historical* and the *Futurist*, the case is different; and it is between these that the student of prophecy is especially called upon to choose, since

[1] 2 Timothy ii. 18. It may be added that the theory above noticed has been recently put prominently forward in the chief organ of Spiritualists.

they are opposed to each other nearly throughout the whole course of apocalyptic prophecy; and also to judge whether or not any modicum of truth may exist in that view which he may feel compelled to reject. They are the systems most prominent at the present time, and to one or the other of them, most of those who take any interest in prophecy at all belong. It may be well, therefore, at the very outset to state briefly some of the principal points of difference between these two conflicting methods of interpretation.

One main feature of the *Historical* system of interpreting the apocalyptic visions of Daniel and John is *continuity*, that is to say, that the events prophetically foreshadowed in them are spread over a period reaching continuously from the time of the prophet down to the last event named in the prophecy. Thus, in Daniel, the vision of the image begins with the Babylonian monarchy and extends continuously over the whole period up to the second coming of Christ. Similarly the corresponding vision of the four Beasts, granted to Daniel rather later, towards the close of the Babylonian Empire, reaches continuously up to the establishment of Christ's Millennial kingdom, giving special prominence to a remarkable Power antagonistic to the Church which was to appear in the world in the time of the fourth Beast, or Roman Empire. The same principle applies to the Book of Revelation. The visions taken together cover the whole period *continuously* between the time of St. John and the Second Advent, foreshadowing with more or less distinctness prominent events, which were to take place throughout the present dispensation, affecting the condition of God's people in the world.[1]

This is in direct contrast to the *Futurist* system of exposition, which, according to its chief representatives, interposes a huge gap, or blank, in God's prophetic revelation, leaving out almost the whole of this dispensation. They even apply this theory to the vision of the Image in Daniel, where the idea seems absolutely excluded by the obvious fact that the legs and feet, which refer to the present dispensation, are without any such gap. In accordance with this theory they hold that the mass of the Book

[1] The continuity of the Historical system is well explained in Dr. Grattan Guinness' excellent volume, *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 118.

of Revelation, from chapters vi. to xix., refers, not to events transpiring in the Church and in the world throughout the whole course of this dispensation, but to events still future, and which are to take place during its last few years.

In his Introduction to the Revelation, Alford thus briefly contrasts the two systems. Speaking of the series of visions composing the mass of the book, he says: "*Historical* interpreters hold that it embraces the whole history of the Church and its foes from the time of its writing to the end of the world. *Futurists* maintain that the prophecy relates entirely to events which are to take place at or near to the coming of the Lord." In opposition to the Futurist view upon this point, this eminent commentator well remarks: "It seems to me indisputable that the book does speak of things past, present, and future: that some of its prophecies are already fulfilled, some are now fulfilling, and others await their fulfilment in the yet unknown future: but to class all together, and postpone them to the last age of the world, seems to me very like shrinking from the labours which the Holy Spirit meant us, and invites us, to undertake."

Probably the reason why the Futurist system has gained a hold upon the minds of many who are interested in prophecy, is, partly, because it avoids this labour by the simple plan of asserting that the fulfilment is still future, and, partly, because that theory of interpretation appeals so powerfully to the imagination that it tends to over-ride sober judgment.

A second marked contrast between the Historical and Futurist systems is as regards the *language* employed by God in apocalyptic prophecy, especially that of the Book of Revelation. Historical interpreters hold that the language of these prophecies is *mainly symbolical*, that they are written in cipher, so to speak, —that for the purpose of veiling the great length of this dispensation which had to elapse before the hope of the Church, the coming of Christ, could be realised, it pleased God to clothe His prophecies concerning events that were to take place during this long period in such *mystical* or *symbolic* terms that their meaning at first could only be imperfectly and uncertainly guessed at, while, as time rolled on, and the light of history was

shed upon them, their signification was to become clearer and clearer. Some of these symbolic terms we find interpreted by God Himself in giving the prophecies, to serve as a guide for discovering the meaning of the rest, and to show that the language in which these prophecies are couched is of a *figurative* character, and therefore not to be literally understood.

Futurists, on the contrary, maintain, speaking generally, that these prophecies are to be interpreted *literally*; and that the descriptions in the visions of the Revelation will be literally and actually fulfilled during the last few years of this dispensation. We shall see in the course of our inquiry to what extravagance of interpretation this theory leads. The plea is put forward that only those descriptions which are in the context divinely explained to be symbols are to be regarded as such, the rest are literal. This is an assumption that is entirely disproved by a comprehensive study of the Historical interpretation, which shows, as we have already remarked, that God explained some symbols to teach us to seek in the same way the explanation of other symbols, for which abundant hints are to be found elsewhere in Scripture. Thus Lange well remarks on the interpretation of the seven "stars" in Revelation i.: "It gives us to understand that *the entire series of visions will consist of symbolical mysteries, not to be understood literally*, requiring interpretation, and susceptible of interpretation through Biblical means. The interpretation which Christ here gives by way of example reminds us of the interpretation of the first two parables in Matthew xiii., also designed as a guide to the interpretation of the rest."

Futurists constantly remind us of how the various prophecies relating to Christ's first coming were literally fulfilled, such as the being born in Bethlehem, the riding on an ass, etc. Hence they argue that prophecy generally is intended to be literally understood, and thus the Book of the Revelation must be similarly interpreted.

The answer is obvious. God uses two kinds of prophecy: (1) clear, literal prophecies, like the above, where there was no reason for concealment, but rather the opposite; (2) mysterious, symbolical prophecies, like those of Daniel and John, where there *was* a motive for concealment, as we shall show in the

course of our inquiry. This latter point has been well put by Dr. Gordon: "The long interval of apostasy and trial, which lay before the Church ere the advent should arrive, was both revealed and concealed in prophecy — revealed even to the minutest circumstance and detail; yet in such hieroglyphic symbols and chronology that it should remain graciously concealed until history should furnish the Rosetta Stone for its interpretation."[1]

It is important, however, to notice that literal expressions occur in prophecies mainly characterised by symbolism, just as figurative expressions are introduced into literal discourse. It is in this that study and intelligence are necessary in order to discern the true meaning.

Our Futurist brethren claim that by their *literal* system of interpretation they do more honour to God's Word than Historical expositors do when they assign a *figurative* sense to expressions and descriptions in apocalyptic prophecies. We believe that it can be shown that they are entirely mistaken in this supposition. Even in ordinary discourse and narrative in God's Word the language is constantly intended to be understood in a figurative sense. How much more might this be expected to be the case in apocalyptic prophecy, where there is an obvious reason for clothing revelation with a certain amount of mystery? Did our Lord commend His disciples for honouring His Word when they interpreted literally His admonition, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"? Rather did He not rebuke them for their want of perception? Would they have honoured His Word more if they had accepted the literal meaning of His utterance, and had attempted the feat of transporting the Mount of Olives through the air into the Mediterranean by word of command, because He had promised them as the reward of faith: "Even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done"? Surely those may claim to honour God's Word at least equally with Futurists, and, we believe, more intelligently, who take pains to discover the deep and mysterious meaning that often lies beneath its surface, and who, by humbly and carefully seeking to follow out the hints given by God Him-

[1] See further on this point, p. 134.

self for unfolding the meaning of prophetic visions, are able to show their marvellous fulfilment in history.

The late eminent and saintly Dr. Gordon of America, whom we have already quoted, thus alludes to this point, and to his own conversion from the Futurist system of interpretation to the Historical. In his Preface to his excellent volume, "*Ecce Venit*," he says: "If we turn away from the Futurist interpretation in which we were 'nourished and brought up' so far as our prophetic studies are concerned, and express our firm adherence to the Historical, it is because we believe that the latter is more Scriptural, and rests upon the more obvious and simple interpretations of the Word."

The utmost that literalism can do is to place us at the visual standpoint of the prophet, and show us what he literally saw, as the prophetic visions were successively presented to him. But what we have to do is to discover the *meaning* of what he saw. And, as we have said, God has given us indications, which we are bound to follow, for finding out that meaning. Stars, candlesticks, the dragon or serpent, the three frogs, the seven heads of the Beast, the ten horns, the many waters, the woman, the lake of fire, the New Jerusalem, all these are divinely interpreted for us in the book itself, not in a literal sense, but as symbols having a distinct meaning. With regard to nearly all the rest of the figurative descriptions, we are able to find the key to their interpretation in other parts of Scripture. It has been well remarked that "almost every symbol which is made use of in the Revelation has been already employed by the prophets of former days, and either interpreted by them, or explained by the accomplishment of their predictions."[1]

Were the candlesticks which St. John saw in vision, symbols of Churches, as explained by our Lord? Then why should not the altars, the temple, the courts, the holy city, the tribes, have also a symbolical meaning?

Are stars symbols of rulers or of those in positions of authority? Then it follows by analogy that a like symbolical meaning may attach to sun and moon,—the firmament in which they shine.

[1] Sir A. Blackwood in the *Christian*, February 23rd, 1893.

Are waters symbolic of peoples and nations as interpreted by the angel? Then why should not hills, and mountains, and rivers, and other natural objects, be capable of bearing a like symbolical meaning?

Take, for example, the second Trumpet, at the sounding of which we read that St. John saw "as it were a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."[1] Now we have an explanation of the prophetic symbol of a *mountain* provided for us in several passages of Scripture, as, for example, where Jeremiah, foretelling the downfall of the destructive power of Babylon, speaks of it as a "*destroying mountain*" destined to be thrown down.[2] Is it not, therefore, a more intelligent and reverent method of interpretation, since reverence for God's Word implies careful study of it and following its guidance, to understand the prophetic vision of the second Trumpet, quoted above, in a similar symbolical manner, and to take it as a prediction in strong metaphor of a maritime invasion by a fierce power accompanied by burning, bloodshed, death, and destruction of shipping, rather than to interpret the vision literally, and to suppose that on some future day "a great mountainous mass of matter falling from the sky, clothed in seething, thundering, and flashing flames, and dashing into the ocean," will turn the waters literally into blood—an idea practically inconceivable, and not required by the language of the vision, when properly interpreted?[3]

[1] Revelation viii. 8, 9.

[2] The passage in Jeremiah li. 25, etc., is as follows: "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyed all the earth [the metaphor is that of the destructive agency of a volcano in eruption]: and will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain [or rather, as Cheyne translates, a 'burnt-out mountain'] . . . thou shalt be desolate for ever." The latter figure is that of an extinct and collapsed volcano, a scene of uselessness, barrenness, and desolation, just what characterises the present condition of ancient Babylon.

[3] The above example of the literal system of interpretation is taken from a well-know Futurist volume, *The Revelation* by Dr. Seiss, p. 229. We shall give a further explanation of the whole Trumpet series later on p. 315.

Again, take the vision of the fifth Trumpet, Revelation ix. 1–11, in which St. John saw the mouth of the "abyss," or home of Satan and his angels, opened, and vomiting forth thick smoke, out of which came swarms of locusts of extraordinary form—"the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war"—with crowns like unto gold, and with men's faces, and women's hair, and lion's teeth. Considering that locusts are an apt and familiar emblem in Scripture of invading armies, and that, in Joel ii., the comparison between these insects and hordes of hostile cavalry sweeping over the land is presented to us, with striking correspondence to St. John's description, it is only a reasonable method of interpretation to follow the guidance of God's Word, and to explain St. John's prophetic vision in a similar manner, according to the Historical system, as being a vision of symbolical meaning and foretelling a terrible scourge of invading horsemen. Moreover, this interpretation is confirmed by the fact that history tells us of just such an invasion, corresponding in a most marvellous manner with the other symbolic features of the vision.

Surely, therefore, such a view is alike more reverent and reasonable than to suppose, as Futurists tell us, that towards the close of the present dispensation all this is going to be "literally realised in all its horrible details," that the mouth of the abyss is going to be literally opened, and that out of the thick smoke issuing from it evil spirits will swarm forth over the earth, actually appearing in the strange shapes seen by St. John in vision, and so with their stings will torment mankind? Some writers even venture to speculate upon their probable size as follows: "Figuring to ourselves an outline of body, the tail of which would correspond to the size and make of a large scorpion, we reach quite formidable proportions!"[1]

An attempt is sometimes made to discredit the Historical view by insinuating that it does not recognise a *supernatural* power in

[1] *The Revelation*, Dr. Seiss, p. 244. We ought, perhaps, to add that some Futurist writers, seeing the extravagancies of interpretation involved by the literal method, endeavour to evade the dilemma by chiefly confining themselves to the question of the Antichrist, and by not attempting any explanation of the greater part of the visions of the Revelation, only saying that they have yet to be fulfilled—somehow.

the closing events of the age. Thus the Author of "The Great Prophecies" says that the Historical interpretation of the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials, "suggests, whether intentionally or not, that *whatever still remains to be fulfilled* will also pass into history in a *natural* course of things."[1] This is a complete misrepresentation, unintentionally no doubt, of the Historical view. On the contrary, believing that the position upon the chart of prophecy, at which we have now arrived, is that momentous period of time which was symbolised to St. John in vision by the pouring out of the sixth Vial, Historical interpreters are looking for supernatural events, at the close of the sixth Vial and the pouring out of the seventh, of the most tremendous character, preceding and accompanying the coming of Christ to set up His Kingdom. They look for the taking up of the Saints into the air, and the first resurrection from amongst the dead, and, since at such great crisis as that of Sinai, and of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ, there were physical accompaniments of a supernatural character, so we may reasonably anticipate supernatural phenomena to precede and accompany Christ's coming again, such as those foretold in Zechariah xiv., and the judgments that will destroy the hosts assembled at Armageddon, which judgments will probably be extended over a wider area, and purge the world of obstinate and unrepentant sinners in preparation for the holy and peaceful Millennial reign of Christ. Only we say that these supernatural accompaniments of the Second Advent are not the events foretold in the long series of visions presented to St. John of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, and that so to interpret them is to miss their meaning and to indulge in unwarranted and extravagant anticipations, such as in the instances mentioned above. We hold that these successive visions of the Revelation are figurative prophetical descriptions of a long succession of important events in the world, that were to transpire during the long period of this dispensation, and we can bring forward historical evidence which proves this to be the true interpretation of these visions. At the same time it can be shown that at the close of each of the threefold series of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, the language also points on to the

[1] *The Great Prophecies*, p. 48.

epoch of the supernatural which is to form the close of this dispensation.[1]

Historical interpreters, therefore, maintain that *symbolism* rather than *literalism* is stamped upon the Book of Revelation as marking its general character. Speaking generally it is a book of *signs*, a revelation of coming events which, as we are told, was "*signified*" to John. What we have to do is by reverent and careful study of God's Word, by comparing the symbolic language of the prophets of old, and by searching the records of the history of this dispensation, to seek to discover the meaning of these signs or symbols, and to see how far they have been already fulfilled. We believe that the literalism of Futurists leads to extravagance of interpretation, and unwarranted imaginations concerning the future, and that it is no mark of real reverence for God's Word, but rather a misunderstanding of its deep prophetic teachings. This applies to the mass of the wonderful visions recorded by St. John. We have Scripture authority for interpreting them as symbolical prophecies, and historical proof that they have been for the most part fulfilled in the events of the present dispensation. Thus we have evidence of the omniscience of God, and of the inspiration of His Holy Word, and also are able to discern our present position upon the chart of prophecy.

Thirdly, in consequence of these differing principles of interpretation, the *Historical* and *Futurist* views concerning the important subject of the *Antichrist* of prophecy are widely divergent. Historical interpreters hold that the great fourfold prophecy of the "Little Horn" of the fourth Beast in Daniel vii., the "Man of Sin" spoken of by St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians ii., the "Antichrist" referred to by St. John in his Epistles, and the "Beast" of the Revelation under its seventh head revived, relates to a Power terrible for mischief to the Church of Christ, which was to begin to be manifested on the scene of the world at the remarkable crisis of the break up of the old Roman Empire under the invasions of the Goths, and which was to continue in existence until annihilated by the coming of Christ,—in other words that

[1] We shall give an explanation later on of the meaning of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, and shall present some further contrasts between the Futurist and the Historical interpretation. See Part ii., ch. v.

the true fulfilment of the Antichrist is to be found in the Papal Power, as represented by its dynastic head, the Pope for the time being—a Power which began to rise into prominence *at the very crisis predicted for the appearance of the Antichrist*, and has exhibited all its foretold characteristics.

Whether or not there may be any further minor illustration of some of the chief features of the great Papal Antichrist on an individual scale, in the person of the last Pope as some suppose, is a point on which Historical interpreters think there is room for difference of opinion, and it may well be left for time to decide. But, whether such an individual is to arise or not, it makes no difference to the fact already mentioned, on which they are all agreed, namely, that *the Papacy, in its rise, career, and end*, is the true fulfilment of *the Antichrist*, and therefore that that terrible Power which was foretold by the prophets as destined to deceive the nations, to persecute the saints, to set itself up in the visible Church, and blasphemously to claim Divine attributes, *has already appeared*, and now awaits its doom at the hand of Christ.

Futurists, on the contrary, hold that the Antichrist of prophecy has not yet appeared. They regard all the above-mentioned prophecies as having their true fulfilment, not in the past or present, not in a dynasty, not in the Papacy, but in some future supernatural individual, who is to appear upon the stage of the world for a few years at the close of this dispensation.

Moreover, Futurists largely hold that the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Daniel contains a prediction concerning the career of this supernatural individual Antichrist whom they expect, whereas Historical interpreters maintain that that prophecy contains no reference to the Antichrist at all, as we shall hope to prove very clearly in the preliminary portion of the present volume which deals with that subject.

Having thus noted some of the chief points of difference between the various schools of interpretation of prophecy, it may be interesting, and also may assist the reader in forming his own judgment as to which is the true one, if we add a few words concerning *the rise and historical development of these different systems*. Here we cannot do better than to appeal to the authority of

Elliott, whose History of Apocalyptic Interpretation, in the fourth volume of *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, is admitted to be a masterpiece of prophetical investigation. Even Alford, who differs from him in many details of his interpretation of the Revelation, willingly admits the pre-eminence of this work, and the spirit of fairness in which it has been executed.

As to the time of the early Fathers, we shall have to touch upon their method of interpretation later on, in dealing with the subjects of the present volume, and to point out that they had to grope their way in darkness, before the light of history had illuminated the mysterious terms in which apocalyptic prophecy relating to the present dispensation is given to us. It was therefore impossible for them fully to grasp the deep meaning, and it was not intended by God that they should do so; for, as we have said, it was necessary that the dreary length of the career of Antichrist should remain in mystery. Nevertheless, the early Fathers seem to have escaped some of the prominent errors of modern Futurism.[1]

Our Futurist friends constantly claim the authority of the early Fathers in support of their system; but, for the reason given above, the Fathers cannot be regarded as safe guides in the interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy. Moreover, as Alford well remarks: "The Apostolic Fathers can hardly with fairness be cited for the Futurist system, seeing that for them all was future."[2]

After the time of the early Fathers, let us glance at the dark ages, for some seven centuries or more, and ask, What was the method of interpretation that characterised this time of ignorance, and absence of spiritual light? It was the vague *Spiritualising* system which we have already briefly described. Elliott says: "For 700 or 800 years after the fall of the old Roman Empire [A.D. 493] the Book of Revelation had been expounded as if little more than a repetition of mere general common-place enunciations respecting the world's wickedness, the Church's sufferings, and God's consequent judgments, under the form of a storehouse of figures, in which the expositor's fancy might luxuriate without check or limit, without any definite prediction of coming events."

[1] See further on the interpretation of the Fathers, p. 237, note.

[2] *Introduction to the Revelation.* Alford.

Strange that there should be men of ability in the present day who still try to bolster up this system of interpretation, which seems only fit for the dark ages. Is it reasonable, is it respectful to the wonderful prophecy of the Revelation to treat all its elaborate varieties of detail as if different symbols had no different meanings, and to explain all alike by vague generalities which would fit almost any verse? Definite symbols demand definite interpretation. And though brief and general symbolic terms may have more than one application, yet, the more minute and complicated the symbolism is, the more sure we may be that the prophetic description can only properly refer to one particular era or event. This principle of interpretation especially applies to the prophecies of Antichrist, with all the many and minute characteristics given to us for the identification of that subtle and malicious enemy of the Church of Christ. Hence we are bound most carefully to note every detail of the symbolic descriptions, and to spare no pains in investigating what may help to their elucidation.

And now we come to consider the point of time at which the *Historical* system may be said to have taken its rise. We have seen what was the vague and unsatisfactory state of prophetic interpretation under the *Spiritualising* method which characterised the dark ages. What wonder that the study of prophecy was neglected, as being alike unprofitable and uninteresting? But after the long continuance of midnight gloom, streaks of dawn began to appear. Those who were the harbingers of the light of the Gospel were also the means of bringing light to the subject of prophecy, and the *Historical* interpretation began to supplant the profitless generalities of the Spiritualising system. Amongst the Waldenses, and by Wickliffe and his followers, it became more and more clearly discerned, and more and more distinctly proclaimed, that the *Papacy* was the *Antichrist*. The saints of God began to recognise in that system the great Power which was to persecute and wear out the saints, of which Daniel and John had prophesied.

Next came the great outburst of Gospel light at the Reformation. To what School of prophecy did those heroes of the truth belong? They were all *Historical* interpreters, and agreed in the

main features of that system, and fearlessly proclaimed that the *Papacy* was the *Antichrist*. Indeed, it was the conviction of the truth of that system with regard to the meaning of the Antichrist that helped to nerve them to the conflict with that great adversary. The learned Bishop Warburton says: "On this principle [viz., "that *the Man of Sin*, or *Antichrist*, could be none other than *the man that fills the Papal chair*"] was the Reformation begun and carried on; on this the great separation from the Church of Rome was conceived and perfected."

From this time forward the Historical system of interpretation became firmly established. It can point to a long line of names conspicuous alike for intellectual power and personal piety, such as Mede, Vitringa, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Prof. Birks of Cambridge, Mr. Elliott, and, in our own day, Dr. Grattan Guinness, and Dr. Gordon of America. Agreed upon the general method of interpretation which we have noticed as distinctive of the Historical system, each writer has sought to bring fresh light to bear upon details. One great event after another in the history of the world, like the beacon lights that show the course to the mariner, has proved that Historical interpreters are on the right lines, and has enabled them to discern their present position in the prophetical chart. And now we only wait for the closing events of this dispensation to complete the proof and to fulfil what yet remains to be accomplished.

Next we come to consider the time of the rise of the *Futurist* system as we now have it, and the occasion which led to it.

So great a hold did the conviction that the Papacy was the Antichrist gain upon the minds of men, that Rome at last saw she must bestir herself, and try, by putting forth other systems of interpretation, to counteract the identification of the Papacy with the Antichrist.

Accordingly, towards the close of the century of the Reformation, two of her most learned doctors set themselves to the task, each endeavouring by different means to accomplish the same end, namely, that of diverting men's minds from perceiving the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Antichrist in the Papal system. The Jesuit Alcasar devoted himself to bring into prominence the

Preterist method of interpretation, which we have already briefly noticed, and thus endeavoured to show that the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the Popes ever ruled at Rome, and therefore could not apply to the Papacy. On the other hand the Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the Papal Power by bringing out the *Futurist* system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly not to the career of the Papacy, but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580, may be regarded as the Founder of the Futurist system in modern times.[1]

It is a matter for deep regret that those who hold and advocate the Futurist system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are thus really playing into the hands of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the Antichrist. It has been well said that "Futurism tends to obliterate the brand put by the Holy Spirit upon Popery." More especially is this to be deplored at a time when the Papal Antichrist seems to be making an expiring effort to regain his former hold on men's minds. Now once again, as at the Reformation, it is especially necessary that his true character should be recognised, by all who would be faithful to "the testimony of Jesus." That the work of the Reformation is being sapped and mined in England is only too evident. It has been boldly and eloquently proclaimed by Archdeacon Farrar, and is acknowledged by some of our Bishops. Is it not time, therefore, that those who oppose the Historical system, which, by identifying the Papacy with the Antichrist, formed the prophetical basis of the Reformation, should ask themselves whether they are not in this way really strengthening the hands of those who are now endeavouring to undo that glorious work?

[1] *Introduction to the Revelation.* Alford.

PART I

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

DANIEL IX. 24–27

CHAPTER I

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

DANIEL IX. 24–27

THE Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, delivered by the Angel Gabriel to Daniel, is one of the most interesting and wonderful predictions in Scripture. The great importance attached to it by the Jews, the difficulties attending its interpretation, and the marvellous accuracy of its fulfilment when rightly understood, invite the attention of every student of prophecy. Indeed, a knowledge of its meaning is necessary for all who would be on their guard against erroneous systems of interpretation based upon some of its clauses. It has well been said that the obscure passages of Scripture are the strongholds of error. And, accordingly, there are brief and obscure expressions in this prophecy, grammatically capable of more than one meaning, which have been seized upon by certain expositors as a basis on which to rear their erroneous system of interpretation. The writers we allude to sometimes assume, or even boldly assert, that the meaning *they* put upon ambiguous expressions is the only possible interpretation that the words will bear; and thus they use this prophecy as a lever by which they seek to force that interpretation upon other prophetical Scriptures, notably upon those in the Book of Revelation referring to the "Beast," or Antichristian power, there spoken of.

In order to understand the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel, it is highly necessary in the first place to notice the relation it bears to Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years' captivity.

Daniel in exile with his brethren was perplexed and anxious about the ending of that period. He could not be quite certain

about the exact starting-point of the seventy years, as the captivities were accomplished by several stages; but he seems to have had a conviction that it was *about* the time for the term to run out, and so he prayed to God concerning it, and confessed his own sin and that of his nation.

The angel who was sent to him in consequence of his prayer did not say anything directly as to the termination of the period of seventy years, which was the chief point of Daniel's anxiety; for God often answers prayers in a different way to that which is expected. But he made a communication to Daniel which was of more importance, in which it was *assumed* that the restoration he inquired about would take place. And, as a matter of fact, the restoration began to come about under the edict of Cyrus, within two years from the time of Daniel's prayer.

The angel told Daniel of another term of years that must be accomplished on the Jewish nation, and which would involve consequences of infinite importance. This term of years was to consist, not of seventy years, like that about which Daniel had inquired, but of a period seven times as long, namely, seventy weeks, or sevens, of years.

That the term "weeks" here means weeks of *years* is admitted on all sides. Thus Keil, for example, shows that the word literally means "time divided into sevenths," and adds:—"The reasons for the opinion that common, *i.e.*, seven-day, weeks, are not meant, lie partly in the contents of verses 25 and 27, which undoubtedly teach that that which came to pass in the time named could not take place in common weeks, partly in the reference of the seventy 'weeks' to the seventy years of Jeremiah v. 2." We may add that elsewhere in Scripture the word here used for "week" always means a week of "days." Hence it is implied in this passage that a *day* is mystically or symbolically used to represent a *year*.[1]

Let us now quote the prophecy:—"Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know there-

[1] A fuller explanation of the *year-day* interpretation will be found on p. 135.

fore, and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one the prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks :—it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing : and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary : and the end thereof [*marg.*] shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war : desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week : and in the midst of the week [*marg.*] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease ; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate ; and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate [*marg.*]."[1]

We hope to make it clear that this wonderful prophecy contains a very brief summary of the future of the Jewish nation from the time of Daniel down to the time of their rejection by God as a nation in consequence of their having rejected their Messiah ; together with a remarkably exact prediction concerning the public ministry and mediatorial work of Christ, and His death at the hands of those He came to save.

Let us first look at the opening announcement by the angel :— "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon the holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." This verse contains a general statement relating to the prophecy, further details being afterwards taken up and amplified according to the method frequently adopted by God's

[1] Daniel ix. 24–27. Some who have undertaken to expound this prophecy give *their own* translation of the Hebrew, which is, of course, a translation favouring the meaning which they wish to put upon the prophecy. But surely the combined result of the ablest Hebrew scholars in England and America is a higher and safer authority to go upon than the translation of a private individual. Accordingly in the above quotation the Revised Version has been followed ; but the alternative rendering, as given in the margin, and which we are, of course, free to accept, has been adopted in several instances, for reasons which will afterwards be explained.

prophets in delivering their messages. After briefly stating the duration of the whole period of the new term of years, and that it related in a special manner to the Jews and Jerusalem, the angel dwells with emphasis and repetition upon the great redemptive work of the Messiah which was to occur at the close of the term of years (namely, in the course of the last seven, as afterwards explained), an event involving the most momentous issues not only to the Jews and Jerusalem, but to the human race and the world at large. As regards the whole term of years, Dr. Pusey, in his well-known work on Daniel, observes, "The interval had an evident reference to the seventy years of captivity. . . . Seventy years were the term of their captivity, seven times seventy years was to be the main sum of their new period of probation in possession of their land and restored city."

Before entering upon a detailed explanation of the clauses above quoted, and of the meaning of the whole prophecy, it will be necessary in the first place to notice a strange interpretation confidently put forward by some writers of the Futurist school, which, for the sake of brevity, has been called the *gap-theory*, namely, that the last week of the seventy of which the angel speaks is to be postponed till the end of this dispensation. This theory, for which, as we hope to show, there is no foundation, is one of the chief supports of the whole system of Futurist interpretation of prophecy, and especially of their view that the mass of the Book of Revelation is still in the future, and that it relates to the events of the seventieth week so postponed, instead of being, what we believe it to be, a symbolic description of events extending over the whole interval between our Lord's first and second coming.[1]

In the opening expression of the prophecy, "Seventy weeks are decreed," the word for "decreed" is literally, as pointed

[1] Thus a prominent modern writer of the Futurist school says:—"The plan of the Apocalypse presents no serious difficulty, provided that all remember its threefold division, *and interpret it by means of the great clue, the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks*" (*The Great Prophecies*, p. 335). But if it can be shown, as we hope to do, that this supposed clue, namely, that of the gap-theory, is altogether a mistake, what becomes of the interpretation of the Revelation based upon it?

out by Keil and other scholars, "cut off," a meaning which is also recognised by the Futurist expositor Tregelles. It is, therefore, as though from the long measuring line of time this portion is cut off, defining a period which leads up to and includes that which forms the most important subject of the prophecy, further details being afterwards added.

One would think that, on the natural common-sense acceptation of these words, it must be obvious to every unbiassed reader that the length or period thus said to be cut off, or determined, is regarded as being *one* and *continuous*—that is to say, that the four hundred and ninety years, figuratively spoken of as seventy "weeks," or sevens, of years, run on in *one continuous course* from the starting-point to the close. Who, for instance, could possibly suppose that if any one were to say that he would cut off a length of seventy inches from a tape measure in order to do something with it, he would mean that he would cut off a length of sixty-nine inches from one end of the measure, and that the remaining inch of the seventy would be cut off at the other end of the measure, separated by hundreds of inches between?

But, besides this, it may be further shown that the period of seventy weeks, or "sevens" of years, is a *continuous* period, by the obvious relation, already noticed, between this term of seventy "sevens" and the seventy years of which Jeremiah had prophesied. And this is a consideration which has been emphatically pointed out by Pusey, and other able commentators of all schools of interpretation. Since, therefore, the two terms of years are thus obviously related to each other, and since the term of seventy years foretold by Jeremiah, and about which Daniel had inquired, was indisputably a *continuous* period from beginning to end, does it not naturally follow, as a matter of common-sense reasoning, that when the angel spoke to him in reply of another period seven times as long, he similarly meant a *continuous period*? Yet the theory, which forms such a prominent feature of Futurist interpretation, would have us to believe that the last seven years is separated from the previous portion of the period by an enormous "gap" of some eighteen hundred years and more. The previous portion, they say, of sixty-nine weeks led up to the time of the Messiah, at the beginning of this dispensation,

but the seventieth "week" is postponed till the end of the dispensation, and represents the career of an individual Antichrist whom they expect. And, moreover, they add the further error built upon this theory, which we have already noticed, namely, that it is with the events of this period of seven years, so postponed, that the main part of the Book of Revelation is taken up.

The idea of this huge gap intervening between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week, in a case where a *definite period of seventy weeks* is being spoken of, is so unnatural, and so contrary to a common-sense understanding of the passage, that nothing but absolute necessity, and the plainest possible language to that effect in the prophecy itself, could justify such a strange interpretation. But so far is this from being the fact, that scholars and commentators of the highest reputation, such as Sir I. Newton, Pusey, Elliott, Godet, Burgon, and many others, have shown clearly that no such meaning is conveyed by the terms of the prophecy, but that, on the contrary, the whole period is, as we have said, *one and continuous*, and does not admit of any such unnatural break. Even the learned German commentator, Keil himself, although a Futurist, is compelled to admit this, and says: "The seventy sevens are to be viewed as a whole, as a *continued period* of seventy sevens *following each other*."[1] It may naturally be asked, How then can he possibly make the prophecy square with the Futurist theory which he holds, namely, of the latter part of it referring to an individual Antichrist who is to appear at the close of this dispensation? Well, seeing the error and the untenability of the "gap" theory, he is driven to the necessity of trying to stretch the term of years included in the seventy weeks to the close of this dispensation by the extraordinary and impossible device of taking the number of "weeks" as representing *no definite period at all*. His interpretation is a peculiar one and, as he rightly says, "contradicts the usual interpretations completely." He takes the edict referred to as being that of Cyrus, B.C. 536, not that of Artaxerxes. He regards the first seven weeks as an *indefinite* period denoting the interval be-

[1] The admissions of this eminent scholar and commentator will be frequently quoted because, being a Futurist, he cannot be suspected of any bias in favour of the view here advocated.

tween B.C. 536 and the appearance of Christ; and the next sixty-two weeks as also an *indefinite* period denoting the interval between the time of Christ and the end of this dispensation, when the last week is to come in, which, with other Futurists, he believes to be the period of the Antichrist. Such an explanation is as unsatisfactory as it is unproven. And it contradicts the relation, which he himself admits to exist, between the seventy years of the captivity and the seventy weeks; for the former was certainly not only a continuous but also a *definite* period. Such are the straits to which they are driven who endeavour to use this prophecy as a basis of the Futurist theory of a supernatural individual yet to appear as the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Antichrist.[1]

We may now proceed to examine the clauses of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in detail, and we hope to show that not only the language used in the prophecy, as interpreted by scholars of the highest reputation, and according to the common-sense meaning of the words conveyed to the mind of an ordinary reader, but also the marvellous accuracy of its fulfilment with regard to dates, prove that no Antichrist at all is referred to, and that such a meaning, instead of being absolutely required by the terms employed, as upholders of the gap-theory assert, is not even allowable as a possible interpretation.

For the sake of clearness we will quote again the six clauses of verse 24, at the beginning of the prophecy, following upon the angel's announcement of the total term of years: "to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" (R.V.). These clauses refer, as is very generally admitted, to that which is the most important topic of the whole prophecy, namely, the

[1] A recent writer has remarked that in the Hebrew for "seventy weeks are determined" the verb is in the singular, *is* not *are*. It indicates the idea of unity and continuity, as regards this period, which is not broken by the whole being subsequently divided into three principal parts. That is to say that as the first seven weeks touch the sixty-two, so the last week does also. There is no gap between either.

For a further criticism of the gap-theory, see p. 68.

manifestation of the Messiah to accomplish His great redemptive work.

One would think that the mere reading of these sentences would at once suggest to those whose minds are familiar with Scripture language concerning Gospel truths, particularly the great truth of the Atonement, that the blessings here spoken of must not be limited to Daniel's people, although the whole prophecy is specially addressed to them; but that the words find their fulfilment in the work of Christ upon the Cross for all. This, however, is not the view of Futurist writers. They hold that the fulfilment is still future, and that these sentences are to be applied to the Jews with a restored Temple. Thus Dr. Tregelles says: "I do not regard any of them as referring strictly to the work of Christ upon the Cross."[1] The mistake arises from the assumption, often made in the most dogmatic terms, that because this prophecy specially concerns Daniel's people and city, therefore nothing that concerns the world at large as well as the Hebrews, may be introduced into it. This is an arbitrary limitation of God's prophetic Word, and quite unwarranted. Many prophecies concerning the Messiah were addressed specially to the Hebrew race, but nevertheless contained intimation of blessings in which all nations partake. This is indeed a familiar feature in the Messianic predictions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the

[1] Tregelles on Daniel, p. 97 (5th Ed.). Similarly the author of a pamphlet entitled *The Seventy Sevens*, postponing the last week of the seventy till the end of this dispensation according to the gap-theory, says: "At the end of these years the still obstinate transgressors of Israel should be shut up and sealed." He compares Revelation xx. 3; but as that passage refers to the temporary confinement of Satan in "the abyss" during the Millennium, it is hard to see how it can illustrate the fate of obstinate transgressors of Israel. Besides, the words of the prophecy in Daniel are, "to finish transgression and to make an end of sins" (R.V.). And even if we take the different reading given in the margin,—"to restrain the trangression, and to seal up sins,"—that is quite a different thing from "shutting up and sealing obstinate transgressors," whatever that may mean. This Futurist author continues: "the repentant should find atonement for their iniquity; everlasting righteousness should be brought in *for the nation*—this prediction is not concerned with the world. . . . Of course [!] the reference to the atonement is not to be understood directly of the work upon the cross, but of the application of it to the Jewish people, which will not take place until the close of the age." (*The Seventy Sevens*, p. 7.)

other prophets. Moreover it is obvious that the terms of these clauses are expressed in the most absolute and general manner possible. Like other similar prophecies, they constitute a flash of Gospel light shining forth in the dimness of the Old Testament dispensation.

The meaning of these opening sentences of the prophecy is so admirably given in Dr. Pusey's work on Daniel that we cannot do better than quote from it :—"That which was foretold to Daniel, in answer to his confession of his own sin, and of the sins of the people, of their iniquities and transgressions, and to his prayer for pardon, was a promise of absolute forgiveness of sins, 'to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.' Sin was to be done away, hid out of sight, forgiven.[1] The words which Daniel had so often repeated in his deep intercessory prayer, *sins*, *iniquity*, *transgression*, the thought of which lay so heavily upon him, are now repeated to him in mercy, to assure him the more emphatically through that threefold repetition, that God would put them away as if they had not been. But the mere removal of sin is imperfect. The threefold complement is added, 'and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy (A. V. Holy).'" He goes on to show that these terms must not be limited in their application to the Jewish nation as Futurist expositors are wont to assert :—"The words are quite in the abstract, *transgressions*, *sins*, *iniquity*. The fulfilment would have fallen short of the prophecy unless not their sins only but sin in the abstract had been remitted. They were not only to be remitted. They were to be replaced. Hitherto there had been continual sacrifice for sin, a symbolical remission of all sins, on the day of Atonement, wonderful for its completeness as a picture, but incomplete, even because that wonderful picture was year by year renewed. Hitherto there had been many atonements for man's several sins ; God here speaks of one act atoning not for particular sins, but *for sin*. Once in the future, at the end of the seventy weeks [strictly speaking, 'in the midst of the

[1] Compare Hebrews ix. 26 :—"But now once, at the end of the ages [*i.e.*, in the Christian age] hath He been manifested *to put away sin* by the sacrifice of Himself."

last week,' as Dr. Pusey afterwards explains] there should be an atoning for all iniquity, that is, for all of it past, present, and to come. *Then* all sin was to be atoned for, and He who ended and forgave it was to *bring in everlasting righteousness.*[1] *Bring in!* Then it was to dwell, to make its abode, to have its home there. *Everlasting!* then it was never to be removed, never worn out, never to cease, not to pass with this passing world, but to abide thenceforth coeternal with God its Author and Giver. It is what man, being made for God, yearned and yearns for. 'I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory' (Isa. xlvi. 13). 'My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people . . . my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished' (Isa. li. 5, 6). 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: and he shall bear their iniquities' (Isa. liii. 11). Jeremiah had foretold that God would 'raise unto David a righteous branch,' and that 'the name whereby he should be called' should be 'the Lord our Righteousness.' Daniel foretells the same; his prophecy joins on with theirs in substance, but he is the first to add the time of its fulfilment.

"And in that fulfilment all prophecy was to be fulfilled. All hitherto had been longing for that hour. That hour come, God set His seal upon *vision and prophet.* Their first office was fulfilled. To *seal up vision and prophet* is not to seal up any one vision, but of *vision and prophet* generally. As our Lord said, all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. It is all one whether by the word *seal* we understand '*set his seal to*, accredited,' as our Lord speaks, *Him hath God the Father sealed*, or 'completed.' Daniel says before, what St. Peter said near 600 years after, when the events came to pass, 'Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled' (Acts iii. 18)."[2]

[1] This expression reminds us of "the Everlasting Gospel" mentioned in Revelation xiv. 6.

[2] As a proof that amongst the early Fathers there were those who thus understood the meaning of this prophecy, we may quote the following from Tertullian, at the end of the 2nd century, as cited by Dr. Pusey:—"What is

The sixth clause:—"To anoint the [*margin* a] most holy" is the only one that presents any difficulty of interpretation. In the Variorum Bible the literal translation is given by able scholars as "an holy of holies." Now unquestionably the general use of this expression, which is frequently found in connection with the ritual of the Hebrews, has reference to a place or thing, such as the altar, and sacrifices offered thereon. But in 1 Chronicles xxiii. 19, in the *margin* of the R.V., it is applied to a *person*, namely, Aaron, and so it is capable of being applied to Christ here, more especially since the sanctuary and its ritual all pointed on to Him as the great Antitype. That it does apply to the Messiah here is recognised in our Authorised Version "to anoint the most Holy," and amongst other authorities by Pusey, the Speaker's Commentary, and also Bishop Ellicott's Commentary. The latter mentions that in the Syriac it is translated "Messiah the most Holy" and also that this meaning is favoured by the LXX. rendering. Dr. Pusey says:—"*To anoint an all-holy* must be spiritual since all else is spiritual. It cannot be spoken of the natural 'holy of holies,' which, in contrast to 'the holy place' is always '*the* holy of holies.' Still less is it the material Temple as a whole, since the Temple, as a whole, is never called by the name of a part of it. 'Holy of Holies,' *lit.* 'holiness of holinesses,' *i.e.*, 'All-holiness,' is a ritual term, used to express the exceeding holiness which things acquire by being consecrated to God. The destruction of the Temple, as having been previously profaned, is

this which he says, to seal up vision and prophecy? That all prophets announced of Him that He was to come, and had to suffer. Since, then, prophecy was fulfilled by His coming, therefore he said that vision and prophecy were sealed, because He is the Seal of all the prophets, filling up all things which the prophets heretofore announced of Him. For after the coming of Christ and His passion, there is no more vision and prophet to announce that Christ should come" (Tert. : *adv. Jud.*, c. viii. p. 215).

Similarly Julius Africanus, who wrote about the beginning of the 3rd century, explained the opening sentences as follows:—"For in the Saviour's time, or from Him, are transgressions abrogated, and sins brought to an end. And through remission, moreover, are iniquities, along with offences, blotted out by expiation; and an everlasting righteousness is preached, different from that which is by the law, and visions and prophecies (are) until John, and the Most Holy is anointed." (Cited in full by Dr. Guinness in his *Divine Programme*, p. 338.)

the close of this prophecy. The prophecy promised *an All-holy*, which should be anointed, for *the holy place* which should be destroyed; as our Lord speaks of *the temple of His body*. At His birth He was announced as '*the holy thing which shall be born of thee*.' *The Holy One* became His title, who alone was without sin. The devils knew Him as *The Holy One of God*."

Dr. Pusey further adds the important point that this symbolical meaning of the anointing is fixed by the words of the prophecy immediately following: "Unto the Anointed One, the Prince." Dr. Pusey well remarks: "No one wishing to be understood would write so closely words relating to the same period of time, the end of the seventy weeks, had they not related to the same object."

We may contrast with the above learned and spiritual exposition by Dr. Pusey of the opening sentences of the prophecy, the following remarks by the author of a volume entitled, *The Coming Prince*, in a passage which not only affords an example of the dogmatic style too often seen in the Futurist writings, but also of another failing into which they seem to be often unconsciously led—a kind of *sleight-of-hand* exposition, which consists in adroitly substituting one thing for another, putting forward a paraphrase of their own instead of the words of Scripture, and arguing from it as if it were Scripture.[1] Speaking of these sen-

[1] It should be mentioned that the Futurist writers quoted in these pages are amongst the most prominent of recent writers belonging to that school of interpretation.

In connection with the above-mentioned sleight-of-hand style of exposition—a process of erroneous teaching which seems to have been practised in St. Paul's time (Eph. iv. 14)—we may mention another fallacious method, resembling legerdemain, which prophetical students need to be guarded against, and that is first to lead you to *expect* to see something, and then to persuade you that you *do* see it. Thus, as an argument in favour of the Antichrist being introduced into the prophecy of the seventy weeks, it is sometimes urged that, since the Antichrist is alluded to in certain other prophecies in Daniel, we might *expect* a similar reference in the prophecy of the seventy weeks. The answer, of course, is that what we have to do with God's Word is not to try to see something which we *expect* to see there, but to find out what *is* there. And with regard to the present prophecy, we are endeavouring to make it clear that *Christ* is there, but no Antichrist at all. The argument of what we may *expect* to find in Scripture requires to be used with

tences, the above-mentioned author says: "But it may be asked, Was not the Cross of Christ the fulfilment of these blessings? A careful study of the angel's words will show that not so much as one of them has been thus accomplished. The sixty-ninth week was to end in Messiah's death. [If the reader will refer to the words of the prophecy, he will see that the angel says no such thing, as we shall show more fully later on.] The close of the seventieth week was to bring Judah to the full enjoyment of the blessings resulting from that death. Judah's transgression has yet to be restrained, and his sins to be sealed up. [These, again, are this author's words, not the angel's. The seventy weeks had, indeed, as we have already explained, a special reference to the Jews, being a time of probation for them, in possession of their city and temple, as Dr. Pusey points out; but the blessings to be brought in by the Messiah's great work of Atonement are stated by the angel in the most general terms—'to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins'—and are, therefore, to be by no means limited to Judah.] The day is yet future when a fountain shall be opened for the iniquity of Daniel's people (Zech. xiii. 1), and righteousness shall be ushered in for them. [It is true that the national conversion of Israel and Judah is yet future, and Jerusalem is to be called 'the city of righteousness,' as we read in Isaiah i. 26. This is the subject of many prophecies, but it is not what the angel says here.] In what sense were vision and prophet sealed up at the death of Christ, considering that the greatest of all visions was yet to be given—the Revelation—and the days were still to come when the words of the prophets (Luke xxi. 22) [relating to the destruction of Jerusalem] were to be fulfilled?"

This last question has already been answered in the extract given from Dr. Pusey. The metaphor of *sealing* is sometimes used in Scripture for *concealing* (as in Dan. xii. 9; Rev. x. 4); sometimes, as here, for *confirming*, *completing*, *authenticating*, a prediction or promise.[1]

very great caution. It is useful rather as a confirmation than a proof. And, unless there is good solid *proof* in the Word itself, what we think we may *expect* must be put on one side.

[1] See p. 30. We may add the following testimony on this point by a

It refers to the fulfilment by Christ of all that had been foretold concerning Himself and His work of Redemption—the great subject of prophecy in general, as well as of this particular prediction of the seventy weeks, for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."[1] Its meaning may be well illustrated by our Lord's words to the disciples on the way to Emmaus: "And He said unto them, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken: behoved it not the Christ [*i.e.* 'the Anointed One'—the same title which is mentioned in the prophecy] to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

This author further adds: "Whatever meaning is to be put upon 'anointing the Most Holy,' it is clear that Calvary was not the accomplishment of it." We do not know of any one who says that it was. Certainly the historical system gives no such interpretation. The public and official anointing of the Christ, which is what is here referred to, took place not on the Cross, but at His baptism, as we shall show more fully later on.

Having now made clear, as we trust, the meaning of the general introduction of the prophecy as given in verse 24, we may proceed with the remaining verses. The angel in his following words goes more into detail. After having named in verse 24 the whole term of years as seventy weeks, the angel proceeds in verse 25 to break up this period into three portions; or, as Dean Burgon expresses it: "This series of weeks had certain sign-posts, so to say, which arrested special attention—seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, one week." As to the general meaning

recent writer on Daniel whose Hebrew scholarship is of a high order:—"'*To seal vision and prophet*' is to confirm the predictions of the prophets (so Von Lengerke, Hitzig); cf. in the New Testament, John iii. 33; vi. 27. The metaphor is taken from the affixing of a seal to a document in order to attest its genuineness (1 Kings xxi. 8)." Similarly Kiel explains it: "The shutting up [or sealing] of all prophecy by its fulfilment."

The above objection is, therefore, based upon a mistaken view of the meaning of the metaphor.

[1] Revelation xix. 10.

of these divisions, following continuously on each other, Professor Godet comments thus: "The first is reckoned at seven weeks, *i.e.* forty-nine years. This number stands for the period of *restoration—i.e.* the time of rebuilding of the Temple, of the holy city, and of its walls. The second sub-division is sixty-two weeks, or 434 years. This number has no special value of its own. It is merely the result of the subtraction of the number of the first and third division from that of the total period. . . The third sub-division only includes *one single week*, or seven years. This is the closing period, the time of the Advent and work of the Messiah [*i.e.*, as we shall see presently, his official Advent, or coming before the world in His character of Messiah the Prince]. The number seven marks the peculiar *sacredness* of the final period."

Let us now examine the clauses of verse 25 more in detail. The angel said: "Know therefore and discern [implying that there were deep and difficult meanings in the prophecy], that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Anointed One the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again with street and moat, even in troublous times." This last clause, about the building again, is generally agreed to be in explanation of the seven weeks of which the angel speaks—"the restoration period," as Godet names it. And the two sections together—namely, the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks—make up a period of sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, which begins with the going forth of a decree, and ends with "Messiah [or the Anointed One] the Prince."[1]

It is of the utmost importance to understand clearly to what

[1] It is necessary here to notice that in an important part of this verse the Revised Version has unfortunately followed the punctuation of the old Jewish commentators and scribes, who drew up what is called the Massoretic text. The punctuation of the *Authorised* Version, which we have followed, reads, "shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again," etc. The Revisers, however, have put this punctuation into the *margin*, as an alternative which we are at liberty to choose; and, adopting the Massoretic pointing, they read in the text, "shall be seven weeks: and threescore and two weeks, it shall be built again," etc. On this Dean Burgon, in an able critique published in the *Quarterly*, says: "The Massoretic pointing (here followed by the Revisers) makes absolute nonsense, as

events these two *termini* refer. And first let us inquire what is the decree indicated as the beginning of this term of years.

Now no one will deny that this difficult prophecy of Daniel is full of what one may almost call enigmatical expressions. Both with regard to Christ's first coming, and also in regard to His second, it pleased God to clothe chronological prophecies in a certain amount of mystery. It was not His purpose that man should be able to fix exact dates beforehand with absolute certainty, so as in any way to interfere with the freedom of man's will and action. Before fulfilment there may be *expectation*; after fulfilment, *certainty*. Before fulfilment man can point to *about* the time; after fulfilment he can recognise the *exact* dates fixed by the Divine mind and foretold in prophecy. We shall see that it is so here.

Four decrees are mentioned in Scripture with reference to Jewish restoration—that of Cyrus, that of Darius, and two in the reign of Artaxerxes. It cannot be the decree of Cyrus which is meant, because the periods and descriptions further indicated in the prophecy in no way correspond to it. For the same reason it cannot be the decree of Darius, which was only a re-affirmation of the former, and is not put forward by any expositor as the fulfilment. There remain to be considered the two decrees of Artaxerxes, that in the seventh year of his reign entrusted to Ezra, and the further commission to Nehemiah given in the twentieth year of his reign. We shall endeavour to show that both these are included in this wonderful prophecy; and that the important decree of the seventh of Artaxerxes, which re-constituted the Jewish polity, is the decree indicated in the prophecy as that from which the seventy weeks, *when reckoned in ordinary solar years*, are to be dated; while the commission to Nehemiah, which supplemented and completed the former, is that from which the term is to be reckoned in *lunar* years.

Dr. Pusey has shown. The Regius Professor maintained that the Massoretic punctuation has been altered by later hands; and the punctuation adopted by Jerome and Theodotion, and the Syriac, bears out this opinion." Further than this, since the American Revisers, an equally talented body of scholars, uphold the correctness of the Authorised Version in this matter; and since it is accurately confirmed by the fulfilment of the prophecy, as we shall show, we need have no hesitation in adopting the punctuation of the Authorised Version as being right.

It is often asserted that the decree of the seventh year of Artaxerxes entrusted to Ezra cannot be alluded to because, as recorded in Ezra vii., it relates to the worship of God, whereas the "commandment" spoken of in the prophecy is "to restore and build Jerusalem," and that, therefore, the later commission to Nehemiah, when this was expressly mentioned, can only be meant. But in order to interpret obscure prophecies and to show their full meaning, it is absolutely necessary to explain them by the light of other Scriptures. Now in Ezra i. 2, 3, and vi. 3, etc., we find the record of a restoration decree that was issued by Cyrus, and in it nothing is said about rebuilding the city, and mention is only made of the Temple; and yet in Isaiah, where this same decree is obviously referred to, Cyrus is described as "saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and to the Temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."[1] The reason is clear—namely, that though the decree of Cyrus, as recorded by Ezra, names only the Temple, yet it was regarded in the counsel of God, and spoken of by His prophet, as a decree *to build the city, because it included that in its spirit, and involved it as an ultimate consequence*. Even, therefore, if there were no express reference in the decree of the seventh of Artaxerxes to anything beyond the restoration of the Temple, yet we may learn from the instance just mentioned that God, who sees the end from the beginning, and who discerns the full development whilst yet in the germ, might speak in a deep and mysterious prophecy of such a decree as *a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem*, because the germ was there which was afterwards to be fully expanded by the commission given to Nehemiah in the twentieth of Artaxerxes.

But, as a matter of fact, much more was referred to in the decree of the seventh of Artaxerxes recorded in Ezra vii. than merely the Temple. Thus we read in verse 13 that all who liked were to accompany him to Jerusalem. This of itself involved the idea of restoring and rebuilding the city. In verse 18 Ezra is permitted to spend the surplus money as he pleased, and some of it would naturally be used for this purpose. And in verse 25 he is authorized

[1] Isaiah xliv. 28. Cheyne translates: "All My pleasure shall he accomplish, even in saying of Jerusalem, Let it be built, and of the Temple, Let its foundations be laid." See also Isaiah xlv. 13.

to appoint civil magistrates, and is invested with supreme power of life and death. It was, in fact, as Sir Isaac Newton, Pusey, Birks and other high authorities have pointed out, a decree which was practically the restoration of the Jewish polity, and which *involved the restoration of its metropolis.* It seems evident that Ezra so regarded it, and we could wish no better authority, for in his prayer, recorded in Ezra ix. 9, he thus expresses himself: "God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy to us in the sight of the King of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the ruins thereof, and to give us a wall [*marg.*, fence] in Judah and Jerusalem." Moreover, this accounts for the disappointment of Nehemiah when, some thirteen years afterwards, he learned, by inquiring from some Jews who had recently come from Jerusalem, that these hopes of the restoration of the capital had not yet been fulfilled, and that the walls and gates had not yet been repaired. This led to his being sent by Artaxerxes as a second special commissioner, to carry out more fully and completely that work of national "reviving" which had been initiated by Ezra. Wordsworth remarks that Nehemiah does not ask for a commission to build the city; he assumes that this had previously been given: and, as it remained unexecuted, he asks that he may go and execute it.

Hence it seems clear that we are justified in taking the decree of the seventh year of Artaxerxes as a starting-point from which to reckon the seventy weeks, or 490 years, of this remarkable prophecy.

But it seems still more clear that the decree entrusted to Nehemiah thirteen years later, in the twentieth of Artaxerxes is *also* a starting-point of the seventy weeks, since the wording of this decree correspond smore fully and accurately with the terms of the prophecy, and distinctly contains a "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."

When we come to examine the *dates*, we shall find that as the decree of the seventh of Artaxerxes may be said *in a general and comprehensive way*, as already explained, to correspond to the commandment for the restoration of Jerusalem, from which the seventy weeks were to begin, so, *speaking generally, and without*

claiming absolute exactness,—in round numbers, as we say, after a manner not unfrequent in Scripture,—there is a remarkable correspondence of dates, *when reckoned in ordinary solar years.*

But we shall also find that, just as the later decree entrusted to Nehemiah in the twentieth of Artaxerxes *more exactly corresponds* to the "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" than the former one, so, by calculating the periods in *lunar* years, instead of ordinary solar years, and dating from this last *more exact* decree, we can prove a *more exact fulfilment* in time.

In either case, both by solar and lunar measurement, the gap-theory is further shown to be impossible, and the prophecy is proved to relate, not to a future Antichrist at all, but to Christ Himself, and to the penalty incurred by the Jewish nation in consequence of their rejection of Him.

Such, then, are the *two starting-points* of the seventy weeks, or 490 years, according as they are reckoned by solar or lunar measurement.

Now let us see what is the event indicated as the point reached at the end of the sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, of which the angel speaks in this twenty-fifth verse. This period is described as extending "unto the Anointed One, the Prince." There can be no reasonable doubt that the Lord Jesus is the Person here meant. His very name, "the Messiah," or "the Anointed One," identifies Him.[1] As Keil well says: "The Old Testament knows only of One who shall be both Priest and King in one Person." It is equally clear that it is not the *birth* of Christ which is the occasion here referred to. Neither the date nor the character of that event corresponds to the terms of prophecy. *That* was a matter comparatively little known or noticed by the Jewish people at large. What the angel here foretold was something that stirred the whole nation. The event that marked the end of the sixty-nine years was as public as the decree that marked the beginning of it. It was nothing else than the coming forth of Christ before the Jews, at the time of His baptism, as He whom

[1] This is recognised in the Authorised Version and in the margin of the Revised Version, by the translation "unto the Messiah, the Prince."

the nation had long been expecting—the Messiah, the Prince, the Son of David.

And here it is necessary to notice the mistake of those Futurist writers who would separate "*the Anointed*" from "*the Prince.*" They tell us that Christ appeared as the *Anointed* at His baptism, but not as the *Prince* till His entry into Jerusalem at the close of His ministry, a day or two before His death. But, in the first place, it is obvious that the angel does not speak of sixty-eight and a half weeks unto the Anointed One, at the beginning of Christ's ministry, and half a week, or three and a half years more—the period during which that ministry lasted—unto the Prince. What the angel says is that the term of sixty-nine weeks reaches "unto the Anointed One, the Prince"—that is, as we have already explained, unto the appearance of Him who was in His own Person both the Anointed and the Prince. And, in the second place, it is easy to show from the words of the Gospels that Christ *did* come forth at the time of His baptism in just this twofold character. John the Baptist—the herald who went before the King—thus speaks, in a manner exactly corresponding to this prophecy in Daniel: "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand [*i.e.*, in the sense of the King presenting Himself to the nation for acceptance]. . . . There cometh One mightier than I after me." Then follows the scene of Christ's baptism, and His official anointing by the Holy Ghost visibly descending upon Him. Anointing was the rite appointed for the official inauguration of *priests* and *kings*. Thus Aaron and his descendants were anointed as high priests. Similarly Saul and David were anointed as kings by having oil poured over their heads, and were afterwards spoken of as "the Lord's anointed." Hence it is evident that the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Christ, when He entered upon His public career at His baptism by John, constituted the official anointing of Him who was both Priest and King in one Person.

To this St. Peter alludes in his first address to Gentiles, recorded in Acts x. 36, etc.:—"The word which He sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all. . . . How that God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power." St. Matthew quotes the prophecy of Isaiah referring to the preaching of John the Baptist,

that he was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Every one knows that this is, as Lange says, "an allusion to the well-known Oriental custom of preparing the way for *princes* in their travels. The summoning voice is that of a herald." Thus John the Baptist was the herald of the coming of a Prince; and so when Christ came forward, and had been baptized and *anointed* by the Holy Ghost descending upon Him, John pointed Him out as being the *Prince* whose advent he had heralded, that "Mighty One" who was to come, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear; and also alluded to His *priestly* office in speaking of Him as "the Lamb of God." It was the appearance of "the Anointed, the Prince."

Again, Andrew, who had heard John speak, announced to his brother, "We have found the *Messiah*," or the *Anointed One*. Whilst that Christ also then appeared as *the Prince* who was to come is clear from the confession of Nathanael on the same occasion, which was tacitly accepted by our Lord: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art *the King of Israel*." Even amongst the multitudes there were those who thus recognised Him. "The Son of David," *the Prince* that was to appear, was a favourite title for the Messiah amongst the Jews. And so we find early in His ministry two blind men, who, nevertheless, saw the truth more clearly than their leaders, addressing Him as "Thou Son of David"; and similar instances are recorded throughout His ministry. If any further proof were needed, we have our Lord's own testimony to show that His entrance upon His official career was the time when this prophecy of Daniel concerning the appearance of the Anointed, the Prince, was fulfilled; for when He began His ministry, we are told that the burden of His preaching was, "*the time is fulfilled*. The Kingdom of God is at hand"—in the sense that the Prince was then offering Himself to His people, as already explained. That our Lord, in thus speaking of "the time," referred to the term of 69 weeks foretold in this prophecy as reaching "unto the Messiah, the Prince," is recognised in our reference Bibles, and has been pointed out by the ablest commentators.[1]

[1] See Matthew iv. 17; Mark i. 15. Bishop Wordsworth thus comments:—"After sixty-two weeks following the seven Messiah would begin His

In fact, Christ's whole ministry was an offer of the Kingdom to the Jews by presenting Himself as *King*. His disciples were told to go round the villages preaching, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"—*i.e.*, close at hand, or already being offered. Compare the narrative of the healing of the blind and dumb, and Christ's remark to the Jews on that occasion: "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you" (R.V.). (See Lange on these passages, and his Excursus on The Kingdom). The riding into Jerusalem as a King, just before the Crucifixion, which Futurist writers put forward as the time of the fulfilment of "the Prince," was but the last act of the whole scene—the last formal witness that the King had come.

It is objected by some that Christ cannot be regarded as having appeared as King throughout His official career, because He would not allow Himself to be proclaimed as King by the multitude. But the answer is simple. Christ only offered Himself as King on the terms of repentance for sin, and acceptance of His spiritual teaching. He made this very clear. And since there was no such true faith and repentance in the multitudes, who only wanted Him to work miracles for their benefit, and to overthrow their hated masters, the Romans, He who "knew what was in man did not trust Himself unto them," as St. John tells us in his Gospel.[1]

We trust that we have now made it plain to our readers that the Futurist argument in connection with this point, which would separate Christ's coming as "the Anointed" from His coming as "the Prince," is on every ground a mistaken one.

The angel next proceeds, in the twenty-sixth verse, to foretell what will take place at the end of the sixty-ninth week—in other words, after the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks, which

ministry, for our Lord said, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand'—*i.e.*, the time indicated by this very prophecy."

[1] John ii. 24, 25. It may seem superfluous to give further proof of our point that when Christ entered on His public ministry He came forth as a King. We may, however, call attention to the accusation made to Pilate by the Jewish hierarchy against Christ. How did they refer to His public ministry amongst the Jewish nation? It was just this: "We found this man perverting our nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He Himself is Christ a King" (Luke xxiii. 2).

together make up the sixty-nine, as already explained, and reach up to the appearance of "the Anointed, the Prince."

At this point we enter upon the solemn details of the *seventieth* week—the sacred cycle, as Prof. Godet calls it.

The angel says: "And after the threescore and two weeks shall the Anointed One be cut off, and shall have nothing." In these brief words the angel announces the awful fact that the result of the manifestation of the long-looked-for Anointed One and Prince, of which he had spoken, would not be His acceptance by the Jewish nation, but His rejection and death at their hands. And we shall see that this preliminary brief announcement, according to a frequent characteristic of prophecy, is afterwards further explained.

Those Futurist authors who try to separate between the Anointed and the Prince, which we have shown to be impossible, argue in support of their theory that the word "after" here must mean *immediately* after, so as practically to make the cutting off of Messiah to coincide with the end of the sixty-ninth week, and this they do in order to avoid placing the cutting off in the centre of the last week (which we shall show to be the true explanation), as that runs counter both to their gap-theory and their idea that the Antichrist is foretold in this prophecy. Thus one of them writes: "The sixty-ninth week was to end in Messiah's death."[1] But, on the contrary, the words of the prophecy clearly say that the sixty-ninth week reaches unto *Messiah, the Prince*—not unto the *death, or cutting off* of the Messiah. This, therefore, is palpably wrong. The mistake is well shown by the admission of Keil, who, although he is a Futurist, says: "From the word 'after' it does not necessarily follow that the cutting off of the Messiah falls in the very beginning of the seventieth week, but only that the cutting off shall constitute *the first great event* of this week, and that those things which are mentioned in the remaining part of the verse shall then follow. The exact designation of the time of the 'cutting off' can only be found from the whole contents of verses 26 and 27." The purport, therefore, of what the angel says is this, that, *after* the appearance of the Messiah in His official capacity as the Anointed, the Prince, at the end of the

[1] *The Coming Prince*, p. 79.

sixty-nine weeks, the next great event foretold is His being "cut off," and the succeeding words show, as we shall see, that this cutting off was to take place in the *midst* of the following or seventieth week—*i.e.*, in the middle year of the last "seven."

Similarly Pusey refers to this mistake of Futurists as follows:—"The point is—not *in*, but *after*. Then comes the more exact definition of how long after. The entire abolition of sacrifices, bloody and unbloody, was to be accomplished by the Messiah *in the midst* of the week"—*i.e.*, of the last week.

The angel in the remaining portion of the verse makes a brief digression from the narrative of what was to take place within the seventy weeks, in order to show what would be the fearful judgment that would fall on the Jewish nation for their awful crime in the rejection and murder of their Messiah and Prince just mentioned. He says: "And the people of the prince [or '*a* prince'—Driver, Cheyne, etc.] that shall come shall destroy the city and sanctuary; and the end thereof [so A.V. and Am. R.V. and *marg.* R.V.] shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined."[1]

The event here alluded to is admitted both by historical and Futurist interpreters to be a prophetic description of that tremendous judgment that befel the Jewish nation in the desolating war waged against them by Romans under Vespasian and Titus, which ended by sweeping them away like a flood, and destroying their city and Temple. Thus, long before the Jews had heard or thought of the Romans, the angel announced that a prince and nation should arise who would be the instruments of judgment employed by God for the destruction of their city and sanctuary. Their own Prince came, and they rejected and murdered Him,

[1] With regard to the expression "the end thereof," it will be seen from the above that we are perfectly justified in so translating it. As far as the grammar goes, the meaning is ambiguous. Some refer "thereof" to the last substantive "sanctuary," and take the sentence as further emphasizing the destruction of the Temple. Others, as Ellicott's *Commentary*, take it in a more general sense, as denoting "the whole issue of the invasion." In either case the sense is clear, as referring to the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans. Keil, and Futurists in general, who think that in this part of the prophecy an individual Antichrist of the latter days is referred to, of course prefer the rendering "*his* end."

openly avowing before Pilate their preference of a Roman prince, —"We have no king but Cæsar." So, in accordance with God's method of righteous retribution, it was here foretold by the angel that the army of a Roman prince—"the people of a prince that shall come"—was to be the instrument of judgment to bring ruin upon the nation.[1]

It is at this point that Futurists, in a way that seems utterly unwarrantable, bring the Antichrist into the prophecy. Surely when it is said that "the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and sanctuary," it implies, in all common acceptance of terms, that the "people" are contemporaneous in the action with the "prince"—or, at all events, that the "people" are not predecessors of the "prince." But no; Futurists, while they admit that the event referred to was indeed the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, and that the "people" who were to come and destroy the city were the Roman soldiers who fought against Jerusalem under Titus, nevertheless tell us that the "prince" referred to in the prophecy was not Titus, but a prince who was to arise some 2,000 years after the event—namely, the individual Antichrist whom they are expecting as the last Roman ruler!

What would be thought of a historian (and prophecy is but history written in advance) who should commit himself to the statement that the battle of Creçy was fought against the English by the forces of Napoleon Buonaparte, because those who fought against the English on that occasion were French, and Napoleon, who appeared on the scene some five and a half centuries afterwards, was a conspicuous Emperor of the French? Would not such language be held to be contrary to common sense and common acceptation? And if such a way of speaking would not be tolerated for a moment in the one case, surely it cannot be admitted in the other. We confidently leave the point to the judgment of our readers.

[1] It is remarkable that the chief priests plotting against Christ said: "If we leave Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." So they murdered Him, and, in consequence, the very judgment which they hoped to avoid fell upon them.

As an example of this Futurist assertion, we may quote the following from the author of *The Coming Prince*—a recent work already referred to in these pages. He says: "Such is the pre-eminence of this great leader, that he is bracketed with our Lord Himself in this prophecy, and the people of the Roman Empire are described as being his people. Yet Mr. Guinness believes that Titus is referred to! Really the day is past for discussing such a suggestion."[1] We cannot but regret that one whom we personally respect should adopt such a contemptuous style of writing. Instead of carrying weight, it ought rather to make readers suspicious of receiving statements so put forward. Not only Mr. Guinness, but a long line of able interpreters—including such names as Sir I. Newton, Dr. Pusey, Bishop Wordsworth, Canon Fausset, Ellicott's Commentary, the Editor of *Lange*, etc.—are agreed that the prince referred to *is* Titus; and we trust the argument we have put forward will enable our readers to form the same conclusion for themselves.

Dr. Pusey, in his standard work on Daniel, comments as follows upon this passage: "The death of the Messiah entails the destruction of city and temple. 'The people of a prince that shall come,' is, by the force of the term, a foreign people with their prince. . . . Daniel habitually used the word *come* of an *invading* power which comes into a land to conquer it. It is remarkable that, contrary to the facts in the time of Antiochus, and conformably to the facts under Titus, the destruction is attributed to *the people of this prince*, not to himself. Antiochus himself was the soul of *his* persecution: Titus worked to save the temple; his soldiery destroyed it." Then, on "the end thereof shall be with a flood," he adds: "This is plainly 'the end of the invaded,' not 'of the invader.' . . . The 'flood' is evidently that overflowing tide of war just spoken of, the overspreading armies, *the people of the invading prince*. . . .

[1] *The Coming Prince*, p. 296. As to "a prince that shall come" being *bracketed* with our Lord, it would be more true to say *contrasted*, as we have shown. This author's title for his book is suggestive of error. The words in Daniel are "a prince," not "the prince." Moreover, the words "shall come," as pointed out by Pusey and Ellicott, mean to come as a hostile invader.

The end thereof must then be the end of that which has just preceded—the wasting of the city and temple."

Canon Fausset also well comments on this passage as follows: "In this verse and verse 27 Messiah is made the prominent subject, while the fate of the city and sanctuary are secondary, being mentioned only in the second halves of the verses. Messiah appears in a twofold aspect—salvation to believers, judgment on unbelievers. He repeatedly in Passion week connects His being 'cut off' with *the destruction of the city*, as cause and effect." He further rightly adds that "the people of a prince that shall come" is a description that refers to "the Romans led by Titus."

After this allusion to the judgment to be inflicted on the Jews by the Romans under Titus, the angel, in verse 27, returns to the main subject of the whole prophecy—*the Messiah Himself.* It is to the *Messiah*, therefore, as we shall show, that we must refer the word "he" in the beginning of verse 27: "And He shall make a firm covenant," etc. Futurists tell us that this is grammatically impossible, and that "he" *must* refer to the subject who has last been mentioned; and this, they say, is the "prince" of verse 26. But, in the first place, when Hebrew scholars and commentators of the highest authority—such as Pusey, Godet, Burgon, and many others—assure us that the "he" *does* refer to the Messiah, and that there is *no* grammatical impossibility whatever, we need not be concerned with the above Futurist assertion. As a matter of fact, abrupt transitions of person or subject, presenting ambiguity at first sight, and requiring that the context and spirit of the passage should be studied in order to find out who is meant, are not uncommon in Hebrew prophetic or poetic language. As remarked by one of our Old Testament Revisers: "The genius of Hebrew does not require such a distinct indication as our Western languages." Moreover, as is well pointed out in Ellicott's Commentary: "In verse 26 it is *the people* of the prince, and not the prince, which is the subject of the sentence." And, lastly, we have shown that even if the "he" did refer to the "prince" just before mentioned, it

would mean Vespasian or Titus, who led the Romans against Jerusalem, and not some future Antichrist.[1]

In this 27th verse, therefore, as in the 26th, the death of the Messiah is the topic of the first half of the verse, and the judgment on the Jewish nation of the second half. But whilst verse 26 gives only the *historical* aspect of Christ's death, verse 27 gives the *religious* aspect of it, and brings prominently into view the grand *spiritual* results accomplished by that blessed sacrifice. The language, when looked at simply from a grammatical point of view, is, in its extreme brevity, both obscure and ambiguous. It needs that the whole *context* and *spirit* of the prophecy, together with the light of *New Testament teaching*, should be brought to bear on the passage, in order to understand it aright.

In examining the clauses of this verse, we follow, as usual, the text of the Revised Version, except in some cases where the Authorised Version or marginal renderings have been adopted for reasons which will be pointed out. In the first half of the verse we read: "And He shall make a firm covenant [or, as the Authorised Version has it, and as it is also translated by Keil and others: 'He shall confirm the covenant'—make it valid, establish it] with many for [or during] one week."[2]

[1] As a further authority on the above grammatical point, the following remarks may be added from one of our most accomplished Hebrew scholars in Oxford: "'And he shall confirm a covenant,' etc. I do not think the subject of this verb can be determined solely by grammatical considerations. It is too strong to say that the 'he' must refer to 'the prince that shall come,' especially as in verse 26 the subject of 'shall destroy' is the *people*, not the *prince*, as Ellicott points out. The writer has left more or less vague the person who is referred to. . . . The general meaning of the passage must be considered, and we must inquire who is primarily in the prophet's mind—or, in other words, who is the main subject of the prediction?" There can be no doubt that this is the Messiah, the Anointed One. He adds that the long and ambiguous prophecy of Daniel xi. illustrates well changes of grammatical subject in passages where the context alone determined the sense.

As another example of this, we may quote Psalm ii., where the "I" of verse 7 does not refer to the same subject as the "I" last mentioned in the verse immediately preceding. In the one case the Person meant is Jehovah, in the other the Son.

[2] The Revised Version employs the indefinite article, "*a* covenant." The

Now considering that the angel had already spoken of "seven weeks" and "threescore and two weeks," making up sixty-nine out of the seventy, it seems obvious that in this brief announcement he is stating what should be the work to be accomplished through the agency of the Messiah during the last remaining week of the seventy. Thus Dr. Pusey says: "To make a firm covenant with many was the work to be accomplished by the Messiah *during the last week.*"

The great work thus dimly foreshadowed as destined to be accomplished in this last week was none other than that of introducing and firmly establishing in the world the New Covenant, the covenant of the Gospel. Dr. Murphy, Professor of Hebrew at Trinity College, Dublin, in a volume on Daniel, p. 160, thus describes the work of confirming the covenant with many during the one week: "In the beginning of the week the Prince Messiah is to appear as a preacher of the Gospel of the promise and covenant of grace. In the end the seven deacons are appointed; Stephen is the first martyr. . . . In the interval many of the Jews came into covenant with God through faith in the Redeemer." After this last week of the seventy was over, the covenant that had been thus firmly established was publicly thrown open for the participation of Gentiles as well as Jews, as we shall explain more fully later on.

The Septuagint translators of the Bible rendered the Hebrew thus: "And one week shall establish a covenant with many," making the "week" to be the subject of the verb. This translation is adopted by Von Lengerke, Hitzig, etc. Whether, therefore, we render the sentence thus, or as explained above, the same meaning comes out of the words, namely, that the "one week," the last of the seventy, would see the establishment of the covenant.

Thus, in this brief enigmatical sentence which we are considering,—the solution of which was eventually to be found in our Lord's atoning work, and, as we shall show, in Christ's own words at the institution of the Holy Supper,—the angel foretells the

Authorised Version, Keil, Bevan, and other scholars, prefer to translate "*the* covenant." In either case the sense of the passage comes to the same thing. It means God's covenant—the covenant of pardon and acceptance through the blood of Christ offered to mankind.

establishment of that *new covenant* which was to supersede the old. The Hebrew words—which in their literal rendering are: "He shall confirm a covenant with many, one week"—may be fairly expanded by the following, which is given in Bishop Ellicott's Commentary as expressing the meaning of the original:—"During the last closing week [the 'one week' remaining to be accounted for] of the long period mentioned, Messiah, though cut off, shall confirm God's covenant with many, that is, with those who receive Him."[1] Some translate "*the* many." But the article need not be pressed, as is shown in A.V., R.V., and LXX. Whatever primary reference there may be to Jews, like the expressions in verse 24, the meaning must be extended to the *spiritual* Israel; just as in Isaiah liii. 11, 12—"My righteous Servant shall justify many . . . He bare the sin of many"—where the same expression is used. (See Cheyne.)

As regards the meaning of the *covenant* which is here said to be confirmed, or made valid, it should be noted that this is just the work which was foretold in other prophecies as that which Christ should come to do. Thus, for example, Isaiah says: "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine

[1] Some expositors seem to fall into error on the point of Daniel's own understanding of these prophecies. From the angel's announcement, verse 22: "I am now come forth to make thee skilful of understanding," and from the use of such expressions as "Know therefore and understand," verse 25, they seem to infer that Daniel knew the full meaning of what he heard and recorded, and they argue accordingly that "*Daniel must have understood*" this or that to be what was foretold. But, as remarked in Ellicott's Commentary on chapter x. 1, it is clear that *full* understanding of the enigmatical declarations was not given to him. Daniel himself, after having received assurances of understanding (chap. x. 11, 14), confessed at the end of the revelation (chap. xii. 8), "I heard, but *I understood not.*" Moreover St. Peter shows that the Old Testament prophets only dimly understood what they uttered (1 Pet. i. 10, etc.). Such expressions, therefore, as those given above (verses 22 and 25), must be taken to mean that the prophet was selected by God to receive superhuman understanding in that he was inspired to utter prophecies, often given in mysterious language which he himself only faintly comprehended, concerning things to come. And the hint conveyed to Daniel in the angel's reply (xii. 9), "Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end . . . and none of the wicked shall understand, but they that be wise shall understand," seems clearly to indicate that progressive revelation of the full meaning of such prophetic utterances would be given to God's people as time went on, and especially towards the end, when fulfilment was about to be accomplished.

hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a *covenant* of the people [*i.e.* as the medium or mediator of a covenant: Cheyne], for a light of the Gentiles." Again, in Malachi, Christ is spoken of as "the messenger of the covenant," that is, as Cheyne well explains it, the Messenger "who is to actualise, as it were, the covenant relation" between Jehovah and His people, by establishing the new and spiritual one—the very idea briefly conveyed by the angel's words, "He shall confirm a [or, the] covenant with many." Similarly Dr. Perowne comments on the same passage of Malachi: "The covenant which was before the Law (Gal. iii. 17), and yet by virtue of its later introduction 'a new covenant' (Jer. xxxi. 31–34; Heb. viii. 7–13), He comes, in fulfilment of promise and prophecy, as its Messenger and Mediator (Heb. xii. 24), to inaugurate and ratify with His Blood."[1]

God's *covenant* with man is a covenant of the blessing of pardon, acceptance, and an eternal inheritance, to be obtained through the blood of Christ. Bengel shows that it was made (1) by *promise* to Abraham: "In thy seed [*i.e.* in Christ] shall all the families of the earth be blessed"; (2) *pedagogically* by the Mosaic ordinances, the law being "the *schoolmaster*" to lead to Christ; (3) it was given in its perfect form, confirmed and ratified, by the death of Christ Himself. Thus the words in Daniel's prophecy, "He shall confirm a covenant with many," are clearly explained by the passage in Hebrews viii. 8–13, where Jeremiah's prophecy is quoted: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant. . . . In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old." So again in Hebrews ix. 15: "And for this cause He is the Mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called [the 'many' spoken of in Daniel] may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."

In Matthew xxvi. 27, 28, in the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, Christ Himself, as we have already noted, by the expressions He uses, furnishes remarkable evidence that He was then fulfilling the prophecy which we are considering. We

[1] Cf. Cheyne on Isaiah xlii. 6, and Perowne on Malachi iii. 1. Cambridge Bible Series.

read: "And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is My blood of the *covenant*, which is shed for *many*, unto the remission of sins" (R.V.). What better comment could there be to explain the angel's words about *confirming a covenant*, and to show to whom those words apply? The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks begins with a description of making *an end of sin, and reconciliation for iniquity*, and towards the close speaks of One who shall *confirm, or make valid, a covenant with many*. The Lord Jesus combines both in the brief and solemn statement concerning His own blessed sacrifice of Himself—"This is My blood of the *covenant*, which is shed for *many*, unto *remission of sins*."

This Historical interpretation, namely, that it is the Messiah who is referred to in this verse, and not any Antichrist at all, and that the covenant is such as we have described, and not some future covenant to be made with the Jews by a future Antichrist, as Futurist writers tell us, is maintained by Pusey, Hengstenberg, Auberlen, Godet, Elliott, Murphy, Guinness, Ellicott's Commentary, and other high authorities, and we trust it has been shown to be the true one by what has here been said upon the point. But the next clause of the prophecy, by the exactness of its historical fulfilment as well as by the distinct meaning of its terms, viewed in the clear light of the New Testament Scripture, identifies the application to Christ with still greater clearness. After the brief announcement that the establishment of the New Covenant was to be the great work of the last week, the angel, as is frequent in prophecy, adds a further and more definite statement about it, telling us what should be the crowning act in establishing that covenant, and at what precise period during the last week it should take place. He says: "And *in the midst* of the week he shall *cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*." We take here the translation "in the midst of the week," rather than that given in the text of the Revised Version, "for the half of the week." The former is the rendering of the Authorised Version. It is given in the margin of the Revised Version. And it is adopted in the text of the American revisers as being the preferable translation. We are therefore perfectly justified in accepting it.[1]

[1] Similarly the LXX. rendering is "in the half of" or "in the midst of."

Now in what sense does He who confirms the covenant with many (*i.e.* Christ, as we have already shown), cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease? We have only to turn to Hebrews x. 4–14, and we there read in that wonderful commentary on the fulfilment of the various Old Testament types and prophecies in the redemptive work of Christ: "Sacrifices and offerings [or, 'oblations,' as it is expressed in Daniel], and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are according to the law). Then hath He said, Lo, *I* am come to do Thy will. *He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.* . . . For by *one* offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified" (R.V.). When the Antitype came and offered Himself, He fulfilled the prophecy and "*caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*," in the sense that He put an end to these typical ordinances by taking away all further need of them.

But at what particular *time* in relation to the seventy weeks did this sacrifice on the cross take place? We have previously traced the history of the prophecy up to the end of the sixty-ninth week, when the Lord's ministry as Messiah the Prince began. And we have shown that the angel next enters on the *one* week remaining, *i.e.*, the seventieth. And of this he says that it was *in the midst of it, i.e.*, in the middle year of this last "seven," that He who was to "make valid the covenant with many" would "cause sacrifice and oblation to cease," by the sacrifice of Himself as already explained. We know that Christ's ministry is calculated as having lasted about three and a half years; and as it began with the beginning of the seventieth week, it is in exact accordance with history that the ending of His ministry, by His sacrifice on the cross, is here foretold as to take place "in the midst" of the last week of seven years, *i.e.*, three and a half years from the *commencement* of the week.

Bearing in mind, then, our Lord's own words about the "covenant with many" that was ratified by the shedding of His blood, and the exact accordance of the date of His death, as being "in the midst of the week," and the further proof from the Epistle to the Hebrews that by His death He *caused to cease sacrifices and oblations*, how is it possible to doubt that this is the true interpre-

tation of the angel's announcement to Daniel with reference to the *one* week, the last of the seventy, "He shall make a firm covenant with many during one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"? And if this be so, what are we to say of the theory of those Futurist interpreters who would apply these expressions to some individual Antichrist, who, they tell us (without any true foundation in Scripture for the assertion), is to appear at the end of this dispensation, and to make a covenant with the Jews for seven years, and at the end of three and a half years to break the covenant and put an end to their sacrifice? Surely, in view of the considerations we have urged, it is not too much to say that such an interpretation, instead of being something that we are bound to accept, as it is often urged upon us, is rather contrary both to a *critical* and to a *spiritual* understanding of the Scriptures.

As an example of the kind of arguments put forward by Futurist writers in support of the erroneous idea, as we have endeavoured to show it to be, of a coming supernatural Antichrist who will first make a covenant with the Jews and then break it, we may instance the following from a previously mentioned volume by a Futurist author, *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries*, p. 352. This writer quotes, from Isaiah xxviii. 15, the words, "a covenant with death and an agreement with Hades." He then adds: "This description evidently [!] refers to the subsequent revelation, that the Antichrist will be a lost spirit, who having already lived once upon earth as a Roman Emperor previously to the date of the Apocalypse, is now in the place of the dead, but will, at the time appointed, ascend from the abyss to wear the royal purple of Rome for the second time" [!]. By "the subsequent revelation," the writer means a passage in Revelation xvii. 8, which we shall explain later on, and show to have quite a different meaning.[1] As to the idea that the words "a covenant with death and an agreement with Hades" refer to that passage of Revelation or to any covenant hereafter to be made with the Jews by a future supernatural Antichrist raised from Hades, it can easily be shown, we think, that nothing of the kind is alluded to. When quoted, as it should be, together with the

[1] See p. 181–187.

context, the passage in Isaiah is as follows: "Wherefore hear the words of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem [alluding to the party in Jerusalem in Isaiah's time who were relying upon their alliance with Egypt]. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell [*marg.*, Sheol, *i.e.*, Hades] are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it will not come unto us" (R.V.). If the reader will consult any good commentary on Isaiah, such as Lowth, Birks, Fausset, Cheyne, Speaker's Commentary, etc., he will see that the words quoted by this Futurist author, "a covenant with death and an agreement with Hades," have no reference whatever to any covenant with Jews hereafter to be made by a supernatural Antichrist raised from the dead, but simply denote "the perfect security from evil" felt by these self-righteous rulers, who had persuaded themselves that they were quite safe, whether from invasion, or death, or judgment.

We now come to the closing sentences in the last half of verse 27, which need not detain us long. Their obscurity as regards the *exact* meaning may be great, but their general drift seems clear enough, and, like the corresponding half of the previous verse, they point, as we have already noted, to the judgment at the hand of the Romans that was ultimately to fall on the Jewish nation as a punishment for their rejection and murder of their Messiah. In dark and ominous language the angel repeats in slightly altered terms, after the manner of Hebrew poetry and prophecy, and also by way of emphasis, the same solemn denunciation and prophetic warning which he had previously uttered.

According to the Revised Version the last clauses are as follows: "And upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate."[1] Sir Isaac Newton has pointed out how

[1] The Authorised Version reads: "And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate." If we take it thus, and refer the pronoun "he" to the Messiah of the previous clause, the allusion must be to the Lord Jesus passing sentence of *desolation* on Jerusalem and the Temple (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38). But the alternative rendering in the *margin* of the Authorised Version is: "And upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator." This translation alludes, like the Revised Version given above, to the invading Roman armies; and doubtless this is the true reference of the clause.

accurately this poetic description foretells the swift invasion of the Roman armies under their leader with the idolatrous emblems of their nation, namely, eagles displayed upon their ensign. Keil renders the expression "borne on the wings of idol-abominations," adding that the latter term is constantly used "of the heathen gods, idol-images, sacrifices to the gods, and other heathen abominations." There seems no reason to doubt, therefore, that the words, "upon the wing of *abominations* shall come one that maketh *desolate*," refer to the desecration and *desolation* inflicted upon the Holy Land and its capital and Temple by the *idolatrous* Roman invader.

This is confirmed by the fact that in our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, He uses the very expression *abomination of desolation* which is found in the LXX. translation of this passage—that being the version of the Holy Scriptures in ordinary use amongst the Jews of His time. The LXX. rendering of the passage under consideration is: "And on the Temple shall be [or, shall come] *the abomination of desolations*."[1]

[1] Dr. Bickersteth remarks: "The 'abomination of desolation' is a Hebrew idiom meaning 'the abomination that maketh desolate.' St. Luke does not use the expression: it would have sounded strange to his Gentile readers." (Pulpit Com. on Mark.)

To pollute the sanctuary, to cast it down, to take away the daily sacrifice, and set up "the abomination that maketh desolate," is a *prophetic formula*, or description, adopted by Daniel several times, though with more or less variation and fulness of expression. It is a formula indicating *an overthrow of God's religion, a desecration of what is holy, and a dissipation and corruption of His order of worship by some great God-opposing power.* This description is evidently applicable with more or less exactness to several crises in history, and it needs care and study of the context to tell which is meant, or confusion will be the result. It has been clearly shown by Professor Birks, also by Bishop Wordsworth (see Lange on Matthew, p. 425), that it is used in Daniel with reference to the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus, also to its defilement and destruction by the Romans under Titus, as in the present passage, and also in a *figurative* sense with reference to the pollution by the *Papal* Antichrist of God's visible Church, by setting up the desolating "abomination" of public idol worship and the sacrifice of the Mass. There is also good reason for a fourth application of this formula, namely, to the setting up of the *Mohammedan* "abomination that maketh desolate" to which reference is made in Daniel xii. 11. This took place in A.D. 637, when Caliph Omar captured Jerusalem. The Christian patriarch Sophronius, when he surren-

The remaining clause—"and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate"—is sufficiently explained by what has gone before. It is the final pronouncement of condemnation on the Jewish nation, when their term of probation is over. It reminds us of St. Paul's declaration concerning the Jews, that because they had "killed the Lord Jesus" and continued obdurate afterwards, "the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."[1] The previous clause had indicated *the Roman army under Titus* as *making* desolate. This clause refers to the *city* as *made* "desolate." We are quite justified in taking the marginal alternative of the Revised Version, "the desolate" instead of "the desolator." It is the rendering of the Authorised Version, and is placed in the text by the American Revisers as being the best interpretation.[2] The clause thus harmonises with the corresponding sentence in the previous verse referring to the destruction of Jerusalem—"even

dered to Omar, exclaimed, "Verily, this is the abomination that maketh desolate spoken of by Daniel the prophet!" and Omar proceeded to fulfil the prophecy by setting up the Mohammedan Mosque called after his name which still stands upon the sacred spot where the Temple once stood. It is probable that the *spiritual* "abomination" set up in the *spiritual* Temple of the professed Christian Church by the Papal Antichrist, to which we have already referred, may also be included in the meaning of this passage, as Elliott and others think. (See further on this, p. 401.)

[1] 1 Thessalonians ii. 16.

[2] The same rendering is adopted by Pusey and Keil. As far as the grammar is concerned, the word is capable of both a passive and an active sense. The Futurist commentator, Tregelles, admits that the former—"that which is made desolate"—is the more common.

In Ellicott's Commentary there is the following good note upon this word:—"Though the word 'desolate' is active in chapters viii. 13, and xii. 11, it appears in this passage to be used in a passive sense, as also in verse 18. That which is foretold by Daniel is the complete and final destruction of the same city and Temple which evoked the prophet's prayer. There is no prophecy that the desolator himself is destined to destruction, Of his doom nothing here is stated. The 'prince' appears merely as the instrument preordained by God, by whose people both city and sanctuary are to be destroyed."

It should be added that the LXX. translators render the word "desolation" (same word as in "abomination of desolation"), and not "desolator."

Those who uphold the theory of Antichrist being referred to of course avail themselves of the ambiguity, and translate the expression in an active sense as "the desolator."

unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined." It corresponds with our Lord's words referring to the same event,—"Behold, your house is left unto you *desolate*"—and with His prophecy on the Mount of Olives, which we have already mentioned—"When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that the *desolation* thereof is nigh."

Thus we have reached the end of this "dark saying," this mysterious prophecy. Now let us see how remarkably the explanation which has been afforded by a critical examination of the words and sentences is confirmed by the historical *dates* of the chief events mentioned in the prophecy, namely, of *the two decrees* from which the 490 years are reckoned, of *the Baptism* of Christ when He came forth as "the Messiah the Prince," and of *the Crucifixion*, when He was "cut off," and caused "the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," by the sacrifice of Himself "in the midst of" the last week.

Although we cannot pronounce dogmatically, yet the dates can be fixed within very narrow limits, and so *approximate* certainty can be obtained. The best chronological authorities are divided between B.C. 458 and B.C. 457 for the date of the decree entrusted to Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and between A.D. 29 and A.D. 30 for the date of the Crucifixion of Christ.

The date of B.C. 458 for the Ezra decree is given by Keil, Rawlinson in the Speaker's Commentary, Clinton, etc. But B.C. 457 is assigned to that event by Sir I. Newton, who made an exhaustive examination into the subject both upon historical and astronomical grounds. This date is also given in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and is adopted by Dr. Guinness.

The date of A.D. 29 for the Crucifixion is given by Lactantius, Augustine, Origen, Tertullian, Benson, Browne, Ideler, Sanclementi, Clinton, Guinness, etc., and also by the Futurist Commentator Tregelles. That of A.D. 30 is adopted by Greswell, Alford, Wordsworth, Wieseler, Ellicott, Thompson, Birks, etc.

In favour of the date 29, Dr. Guinness quotes the following important statement from Browne's *Ordo Sæculorum*:—"The consular date assigned almost with one consent by the Latin fathers

[for the Crucifixion] is the year of the two Gemini, A.U.C. 782, A.D. 29." And as the Crucifixion was in the spring, this would make the date of the Baptism, which was three and a half years earlier, to be in the autumn of A.D. 25.[1]

[1] The author of *The Coming Prince*, in dealing, from his point of view, with the periods in Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, argues for quite a different date for the Crucifixion, namely, A.D. 32, and so makes A.D. 28 the date of the Baptism. But in the face of the evidence which has been cited above, it need hardly be said that this view cannot be accepted ; and it is a matter of regret that it is put forward in such a dogmatic manner, considering the high authorities we have named, who, after a careful investigation of the question, have formed quite a different conclusion.

A difficulty is presented at first sight by the statement of St. Luke (chap. iii. 1), that the date of the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist, and, therefore ; approximately of Christ's Baptism, was "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar." As Tiberius did not begin to reign as sole Emperor till A.D. 14, this seems to make the baptism about A.D. 28. But it has been very generally held that St. Luke dates the year of the reign of Tiberius *not* from his sole principate, but from his association with Augustus as *joint Emperor*, which was a few years earlier. Thus the Speaker's Commentary on the above passage of St. Luke says that Augustus died A.U.C. 767, "having associated Tiberius in the imperial dignity, so far as regarded the provinces and the armies, for two or three years previously." St. Luke wrote his Gospel for circulation amongst provincial readers ; hence he speaks of the reign of Tiberius as beginning at the time when he was known in the provinces as having become possessed of the Imperial dignity. So Farrar, in his *Life of Christ*, remarks, "There is good ground to believe that St. Luke dates the year of the reign of Tiberius from his association with Augustus as joint Emperor, a method of computation which certainly existed, and would be especially likely to prevail in the provinces." So also Greswell and Alford.

This explanation brings everything into harmony. It is, of course, rejected by the author of *The Coming Prince*, who obtains his dates of A.D. 28 and 32, for the Baptism and Crucifixion respectively, by taking St. Luke's date to refer to the *sole* principate.

As to the date of the Nativity, it is well known that it must have been several years before A.D. 1. Dr. Guinness, in common with Lewin, adopts B.C. 6. Birks, Greswell, Wordsworth, Alford, etc., prefer B.C. 5. Clinton says on this point : "The earliest possible date for the Nativity is the autumn of B.C. 6, eighteen months before the death of Herod in B.C. 4. The latest will be the autumn of B.C. 4." We may add the further authority of the excellent Oxford Helps to the Study of the Bible which, in accordance with what has been said above, holds that the fifteenth year of Tiberius mentioned by St. Luke must be reckoned from the time of his association with Augustus as joint Emperor, and that the death and resurrection of Christ must have taken place in A.D. 29 or 30.

In examining the correspondence of these dates with the prophecy, it should be borne in mind that a slight amount of inexactness in reckoning, so as to make up *a round number*, as we should say, was recognised amongst the Hebrews as permissible. The number "ten" is thus used sometimes in an inexact sense in Scripture.[1] So, in speaking of a number of days, they were accustomed to count a part of a day at the beginning or end of the number as if it were a whole one, as, for example, when our Lord spoke of being three days and three nights in the grave. This feature of slight inexactness is also recognised in the computation and adjustment of astronomical cycles of time, as Dr. Guinness has well explained in the *Approaching End of the Age*. They are not *absolutely* exact, but *approximately* so.

We need not be surprised, therefore, to meet with this characteristic in the sacred soli-lunar cycle of the Seventy Weeks or 490 years. Calculated on the *solar* scale, the periods *approximately* correspond to the dates of events. On the other hand, calculated on the *lunar* scale, they correspond with *marvellous exactness*.

Thus the sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, "unto the Anointed One, the Prince," are *approximately* correct on the *solar* scale. Their expiration found Christ appearing in that character. But the more exact *lunar* fulfilment corresponds *precisely* with the prediction, and makes the end of the 483 years coincide with the very year in which Christ at His baptism first entered upon His public office as the foretold Messiah and Prince.

Again, that the sacrifice of the Messiah on the cross took place "in the midst of" the seventieth week can be shown to be *approximately* correct on the *solar* scale, since the Crucifixion took place according to that scale *in the course of* that week. But on the *lunar* scale of calculation we find that the Crucifixion took place *exactly* "in the midst of" that week, in the middle year of the seven.

Let us now look a little more closely into this correspondence of the fulfilment with the dates.

We have seen that there is excellent authority for taking B.C. 457 as the date of the Ezra decree, in the seventh of Artaxerxes,

[1] See, for instance, 1 Samuel i. 8; Job xix. 3.

B.C. 444 for the Nehemiah decree, which was thirteen years later, in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, and A.D. 29 as the time of the Crucifixion. From these data it can be proved that there was a fulfilment of the prophecy both in solar and lunar years in the way already mentioned.

Dr. Alder-Smith drew attention some years ago to the remarkable exactness of the lunar fulfilment, showing that from B.C. 444, the date of the Nehemiah decree, to the Baptism, A.D. 25, was, in lunar measurement, just 483 years, *i.e.*, as stated in the prophecy, *sixty-nine weeks unto the Anointed One, the Prince*; and that from B.C. 444 to the Crucifixion in A.D. 29 is $486\frac{1}{2}$ lunar years, so that the Messiah, as foretold, was *cut off in the midst of the seventieth week.* The Hebrews reckoned their sacred periods by lunar calculation. The Jubilee period was so measured. Hence it was especially appropriate that these sacred periods in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks should have a lunar fulfilment.[1]

Dr. Guinness well explains the twofold fulfilment as follows:—

"The starting-point was to be *a decree to restore and to build Jerusalem* and the terminus was to be '*Messiah the Prince.*' Now there were two restoration decrees issued by Artaxerxes, and they were thirteen years apart. Either of them may be taken as the starting-point, as each involved a measure of rebuilding of Jerusalem and of re-establishment of Jewish polity and national existence. The two decrees are associated with the two names of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the second of the two—that given to Nehemiah—answers *most* fully to the terms of the prophecy. The first was given by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, B.C. 457, and the second in the twentieth year of his reign, B.C. 444. The 490 years ran out on the *solar* scale from the first date in A.D. 34; and, more accurately, on the *lunar* scale from the second date, A.D. 32–3. In both cases the last or

[1] In one of his interesting works Dr. Guinness has made a learned investigation into the Divine method of chronology, and he there shows that the Jubilee period of forty-nine solar years was a soli-lunar cycle, *i.e.* a recurring period of adjustment between solar and lunar measurement of time. This Jubilee period of forty-nine years was calculated from the tenth day of the first month of the first year to the tenth day of the seventh month in the forty-ninth year, and this interval of forty-nine solar years corresponds to *fifty lunar years.* (*Approaching End of the Age.* Appendix, p. 510.)

seventieth week of years included most of the ministry of Christ, His death, resurrection and ascension; together with the formation of the Church by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and the early proclamation of the Gospel in Palestine.

"But the prophecy states that the Messiah was to be cut off *before* the close of the seventy weeks (or 490 years) '*after*' the sixty-ninth had elapsed, and *before* the seventieth fully ran out; that is to say, *in the course of the seventieth week.* He was to be cut off 'in the midst of the week,' *i.e.*, of the last supreme week —the one week which is marked off from its fellows, the week which stands pre-eminent, not only among the seventy, but among all the weeks the world has ever seen; the week of seven years which witnessed the miracles, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of the Son of Man and Son of God. In the middle of this terminal week of the seventy Messiah would, according to the prophecy, be 'cut off,' and by shedding of His own blood would confirm the new covenant with 'many'—not with the nation of Israel, but with many, both Jews and Gentiles. He would also cause all Jewish sacrifice and oblation to cease by putting away sin for ever 'by the sacrifice of Himself.'

"This chronological prediction was fulfilled on the solar scale from the *first* edict of Artaxerxes, and on the lunar scale to *a day* from the second. A simple calculation shows this. Seventy weeks are 490 years, but sixty-nine and a half weeks are only $486\frac{1}{2}$ years; *this* is therefore the number of the years predicted to elapse *between Artaxerxes' decree and the death of Christ.* Nehemiah commenced his journey to Jerusalem in accordance with the decree given in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, during the Passover month, the month of Nisan, B.C. 444; and, as we know, our Lord was crucified at the same season, the Passover, A.D. 29. From Nisan, B.C. 444, to Nisan, A.D. 29, 472 ordinary solar years only elapsed, not $486\frac{1}{2}$. *But* 472 *solar years are exactly* $486\frac{1}{2}$ lunar. Hence sixty-nine and a half weeks of lunar years, from Passover to Passover, *did* extend between Artaxerxes' decree in the twentieth year of his reign, and the Crucifixion, or cutting off, of 'Messiah the Prince,' A.D. 29. Thus the prophecy was accurately fulfilled, even to a day, *on the lunar scale.*"[1]

[1] *Light for the Last Days*, p. 53, 2nd ed. In *The Divine Programme*,

Such, then, is the confirmatory evidence furnished by historical dates. By the mouth of two witnesses, so to speak, by solar and lunar testimony,—the former in more general, the latter in more exact terms,—the truth of this wonderful chronological prophecy is established, and the depth of meaning hidden in its mysterious language shown.

But it is sometimes objected that according to the interpretation of the seventy weeks which has been given, no account is rendered for the contents of the *last half* of the seventieth week, namely, of the three and a half years after the cutting off of the Messiah in the midst of the week. And further it is urged that there is nothing in history to mark the *end* of the seventy weeks.

As regards the first point, if the angel himself gives no information, it is evident that we are not called upon to speak definitely about it. And, moreover, it may equally be said that no account is given by the angel of the events that transpired during the sixty-two weeks, as we have already explained. The whole prophecy, in fact, deals with but three main subjects—the restoration of Jerusalem, the epoch of the Messiah's appearance, work, and death, and the destruction that was ultimately to fall upon Jerusalem—these together constituting the probation and judgment of the Jewish nation. The death of the Messiah, which forms the central point of the last week, was an event of such transcendent importance that it threw into shade, so to speak, what immediately followed; we need not be surprised, therefore, that nothing definite was announced by the angel concerning the closing portion of the week.

It is a frequent practice in painting for the artist not to finish off the corners of a picture with anything like detail, in order that the attention of the beholder may be the more concentrated upon the prominent subject of the scene. Just so, in this prophetic

p. 338, Mr. Guinness further gives a remarkable quotation from Julius Africanus, who, as we have previously mentioned, was an early writer on chronology, in which the application of the Hebrew method of calculation by lunar years to the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks is recognised, dating from the decree of the twentieth of Artaxerxes. It must be remembered that in reckoning the interval from a B.C. date to an A.D. date *one* year has to be deducted.

word-picture, the angel leaves indefinite and unfinished the details of the last portion of the seventieth week; and thus full force is given to his description of the all-important event in the middle of it, namely, the death of the Messiah.

Then as regards the second objection brought forward, namely, that history furnishes nothing which may be taken to mark the *end* of the seventy weeks, this assertion is not correct. The number *seven* implies *completion*, and the completion of the term of probation of the Jewish nation in possession of their City and Temple, and also the complete establishment of the Christian Church in the Gentile world, may be said to have been accomplished during the few years that elapsed between the cutting off of the Messiah and the martyrdom of Stephen. There are no certain data for fixing positively the time of Stephen's death, but it is admitted to have taken place within a few years after the Crucifixion. The three and a half years therefore of respite to the Jewish nation after the perpetration of their great crime,—the period during which the door of national repentance and forgiveness, ere the sentence of judgment should be irrevocably pronounced, was still left open,—may fitly be taken as the epoch which marked the close of the 490 years.

We have previously quoted a passage from Dr. Murphy's exposition of Daniel which confirms this view.[1] Similarly Dr. Pusey says that the closing three and a half years of the seventy weeks "probably mark the time during which the Gospel was preached to the Jews, before preaching to the Samaritans showed that the special privileges of the Jews were at an end." Canon Fausset bears the same testimony. Speaking of the end of the seventy weeks, he remarks that though Israel was not *actually* destroyed till the capture of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, yet it was so *virtually* "about three or four years after Christ's death, during which time the Gospel was preached exclusively to the Jews. When the Jews persecuted the Church and stoned Stephen, the respite of grace granted to them was at an end (Luke xiii. 7–9). Israel, having rejected Christ, was rejected by Christ, and henceforth accounted dead, its actual destruction by Titus being the consummation of the removal of the kingdom of God from Israel

[1] See p. 49.

to the Gentiles (Matt. xxi. 43), which is not to be restored until Christ's second coming, when Israel shall be at the head of humanity."

An interesting confirmation of this view is given in a remark of Archbishop Trench on the parable of the marriage of the king's son. Commenting on the words, "He sent forth other servants," he says: "This second summons I take to represent the invitation to the Jewish people as it was renewed to them *at the second epoch of the kingdom*, that is, after the Resurrection and Ascension, . . . a message still more gracious than the first, . . . namely, that in that very blood which they had impiously shed there was forgiveness of sins and free access to God." He mentions the death of Stephen as one of the signs that under this secondary probation the nation rejected their last opportunity, and incurred the sentence of destruction at the hands of the Romans as mentioned by Daniel in this prophecy.

Hengstenberg takes the same view of the end of the seventy weeks. But it may be well to add a confirmation of this point from a Futurist author, who is therefore opposed to our system of interpretation, but nevertheless admits that which goes to prove it. Mr. B. W. Newton, speaking, not in relation to this prophecy at all, of the date when the probation of the Jewish nation was ended, and the Jewish branch cut off from its olive tree, says: "The branch withered, became a cankered branch, and was broken off under judgment. . . . The date of its excision may be fixed at Stephen's martyrdom." [1]

We have previously explained that approximate exactness, as distinguished from absolute exactness, is all that is required in the computation of a cycle of time.[2] Dr. Guinness has clearly shown that the Seventy Sevens, or 490 years, constitute one of the sacred cycles of time indicated in the Scriptures. We are fully justified, therefore, in accepting the epoch which culminated in Stephen's martyrdom as marking the close of the seventieth week of the celebrated prophecy in Daniel which we have been considering, that prophecy being, as we stated at the outset, a very brief summary of the future of the Jewish nation from the time of Daniel down to the time of their rejection by God as a

[1] *Babylon and Egypt*, p. 301.

[2] See p. 60.

nation in consequence of their rejection of the Messiah. After the culminating crime of the crucifixion of their King in the midst of the last "week" a few more years were allowed to them as a final opportunity for that repentance which St. Peter urged upon them at Pentecost. But it was of no avail. As a nation they remained obdurate, even as Stephen told them, and by their bitter persecution of the apostles, followed by the murder of Stephen, they finally sealed their fate. The term of their probation was ended. The announcement to Daniel was: "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people, and upon thy holy city." That time had now run out, and sentence was pronounced both upon people and city. The Kingdom of God was taken from them, as the Lord Jesus said, and was given "to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"—a nation not restricted to one particular race, but that "chosen nation" of which St. Peter afterwards wrote, composed of all true believers in the Lord Jesus. The passing of this sentence was, therefore, the end of the last week of the seventy; and the terms of the sentence (carried out some forty years afterwards) constitute the closing words of the prophecy, as already noticed and explained: "Upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate."

Such we believe to be the meaning of this difficult, one may almost say enigmatical, prophecy. Doubtless this obscurity is a part of God's probationary method with mankind. It allowed, and still allows, those whose wills are opposed to the *Person* and *teaching* of Christ to find what appears to them to afford a ground for their position. And again this obscurity acts as a probation because obscure prophecies are, as we have remarked before, a fruitful source of imaginary theories, and so it needs care and sobriety of judgment to avoid this pitfall. Hence we find on the one hand Hebrew scholars and commentators of the rationalistic school of Germany taking advantage of the ambiguity of expression to *rule out Christ from the prophecy*. While, on the other hand, Futurist writers avail themselves of the same brevity and ambiguity of expression to *bring Antichrist into it*. But we venture to think, and trust we have shown, that the true interpre-

tation is that which, combining scholarship with sober judgment and common-sense acceptation of terms, views this prophecy, in the light of New Testament teaching and historical fulfilment, as containing no allusion to *the Antichrist* at all, but as a prediction, relating in a special manner to the last probation of the Jewish nation in possession of their country and metropolis, its great subject being the appearance of *the Christ* in due time, and the accomplishment of His great work of Redemption, together with the sentence of judgment which was ultimately to fall on the Jewish nation in consequence of their rejection of Him.

We hold, therefore, that the Futurist system of prophetic interpretation can find no support whatever in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

CHAPTER II

A FURTHER CRITICISM OF THE GAP-THEORY OF INTERPRETATION, TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF OUR LORD'S PROPHECY ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

When asked for any parallel in Scripture to support such an extraordinary interpretation as that of the *gap-theory*, some Futurist writers point to the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, saying that only the events at the beginning and end of this period are mentioned in the Bible, the rest being passed over in silence. But there is no analogy here whatever. If they could show that when God declared that the Israelites should wander in the desert forty years, He meant that they should wander thirty-nine years, and then, after an interval of centuries, they should go back into the wilderness and finish out the term by spending the fortieth year there—then, indeed, there would be an analogous case. But, as it is, the instance gives no support whatever. Rather it proves the contrary, for as the forty years were a *continuous* period, so are the seventy weeks of Daniel.

Others urge, as an argument for the gap-theory, that the Old Testament prophets frequently spoke of the two comings of Christ as if they constituted only one event, without noticing the long interval between. That they did so is quite true. Viewing the coming of Christ in the distance, they saw the two stages in one, so to speak, like two distant ranges of hills blending into one in the far-off horizon. But this presents no analogy whatever to the present prophecy, where a definite number of years are marked off as a period within which certain events are to take place.

In connection with one of the above class of Old Testament

prophecies, Futurists even venture to claim our Lord Himself as recognising the gap-theory of interpreting the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. Thus the author of a pamphlet on this subject says: "By comparing Isaiah lxi. 2 with our Lord's quotation of a *part* of it in Luke iv. 19, 20, we may see that He recognised the interval between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth seven of years, making 'the acceptable year' begin in the former, and reserving the days of vengeance for the latter."[1] It will not be difficult to show the error of this line of argument. The words referred to in Isaiah are: "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." As a matter of fact there is no gap or interval here whatever. The "year" of our Lord is one continuous period, the present Gospel dispensation reaching up to the "day" of outpoured judgment with which it is to close.[2] It was not our Lord's purpose in the synagogue at Nazareth on that occasion to speak of judgment, but of mercy, and so He read no further than the message of mercy. Surely, therefore, to take this incident as if it were a recognition by our Lord of the gap-theory of interpretation in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Daniel is an utterly illogical proceeding and an unwarrantable assumption. There is no true analogy whatever between the two cases.

Other Futurists disagree with their own school as to the first half of the seventieth week. They feel compelled by the facts of the case, which we have already noticed in our exposition, to admit that our Lord's ministry and death constituted the fulfilment of the first half of the seventieth week. Therefore, in order to make out that the fulfilment of that seventieth week is, nevertheless, still future, and that it is to be the period of the career of the individual Antichrist whom they expect, they are obliged to resort to the extraordinary hypothesis that that week, or at least a part of it, will have to be done over again! Thus a writer of that school, holding an influential position, after noticing the fact, which we have already explained, of the Old Testament prophets

[1] *The Seventy Sevens*, p. 12.

[2] This antithesis between the longer and the shorter period, the present "year" of grace, and the coming "day" of judgment and severity, is pointed out by Cheyne, Birks, and other commentators on Isaiah.

viewing the two comings of Christ in one, and after saying that "whether our Lord should fulfil all things at His first coming was left contingent (not necessarily in the Divine *mind*, but in relation to the people, and so in the pages of prophecy) on the question *whether they would receive Him*," adds the following suggestion: "It is therefore altogether probable that our Lord in His ministry contributed three and a half years towards a possible seventieth week of Daniel. But the unbelief of His people put off the final consummation for an indefinite period, like the occurrence at Kadeshbarnea [referring to the sentence of the forty years' wandering on which we have already commented], and it would seem that the seventieth week has to be done over again."

To this we would reply that the same objections by which we have shown the postponement of the last week to be an impossible theory apply equally to the postponement of the last half of it. And, further, the idea of our Lord's ministry having been the fulfilment of the first half of the last week, but that nevertheless that last week has to be *done over again*, with Antichrist for its chief figure, is surely most unnatural, not to say preposterous.

Others again bring forward 1 Kings vi. 1, as if it supported the gap-theory. The author of the volume entitled *The Coming Prince*, from which we have already quoted, endeavours to make much of this argument.[1] The passage in Scripture is as follows: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord." These words, as they stand in the text, present, as is well known, a chronological difficulty when compared with other statements in Scripture. It is a passage with regard to which the most eminent chronologists and commentators have arrived at different conclusions. Ussher and others, computing the period by means of certain genealogies given in Scripture, *e.g.*, of David, Zadok, Abiathar, Saul, etc., which span the period in question,

[1] This author, as before remarked, is only selected as being one of the most prominent of modern exponents of this view. His arguments are common to other Futurist writers, as, for example, the author of *The Great Prophecies*.

affirm it to be correct; and that by supposing some of the times of servitude mentioned in the Book of Judges to be contemporaneous, it can be made to agree with the other statements in Scripture. And this computation has been adopted in the chronological headings of our Bible. On the other hand, Hales, Clinton, Alford, Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Speaker's Commentary, and others, hold that the 480 years of 1 Kings vi. 1 is an incorrect statement. By a different method of computation, namely, by the years given in the Book of Judges for the various servitudes, and for the several leaderships of the judges, and especially by reference to the statement of St. Paul in Acts xiii. 20, who assigns 450 years as about the period between the division of Canaan and Samuel the prophet, they calculate that the time from the Exodus to the foundation of the Temple by Solomon must be something like a hundred years longer than the 480 years mentioned in 1 Kings vi. 1; and so they hold that there must have crept into the text of that passage some error in the numerals, or the words must have been interpolated by a later hand. The Hebrew MSS., from which the Septuagint was translated, read the 440th year instead of 480th. No date at all is assigned in the parallel passage of 2 Chronicles iii. 2. And Josephus, Theophilus, and Origen, when treating of the subject, appear to have been ignorant of the 480 years of 1 Kings vi. 1, which term is first mentioned in the 4th century by Eusebius, though in his latest works he does not adopt it.

In the midst of such uncertainty and conflicting statements, it is obviously out of the question to attempt to derive from this passage any solid foundation whatever for the gap-theory in the seventy weeks of Daniel. Yet, for want of anything better, this is what the author of the volume referred to does. He suggests that the precise and definite historical statement in 1 Kings vi. 1 —namely, that the foundation of the Temple took place "in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Zif, which is the second month,"—means that it was really in the 573rd year, and that a gap of ninety-three years is left out. For the purpose of this theory he assumes that 573 years is the true length of the

interval, although he is obliged to admit that able chronologers assign very different lengths, varying from 741 to 450 years.[1] Then, by an arbitrary computation of the times of the Judges, which can be shown to be incorrect, he makes up a sum of ninety-three years for all the times of servitude of the Israelites to their enemies—a period calculated quite differently by Keil and many other able commentators and chronologers. This assumed number of ninety-three years he deducts from his assumed total of 573 years (an interval quite uncertain, as we have shown), and so reduces it to 480 years; and he would have us believe that this artificial computation is what is meant by the direct statement in Kings, that from the Exodus to the foundation of the Temple was an interval of 480 years. He says: "It is obvious, therefore, that the 480 years of the Book of Kings from the Exodus to the Temple is a mystic era [we would rather say that it should be obvious to every unbiassed reader that it is a definite historical statement concerning the number of years contained in the interval], formed by eliminating every period during which the people were cast off by God. If then this principle were intelligible to the Jew in regard to history [which is a pure assumption, there not being the least evidence that the Hebrews understood any such method of computation], it was both natural and legitimate to introduce it in respect of an essentially mystic era like that of the seventy weeks."[2]

Such are the assumptions which these Futurist writers put forward confidently as if they were facts, and as grounds upon which we are asked to believe in the utterly improbable theory that the last week of the term of seventy weeks, foretold to Daniel by the angel, is postponed, for some 1,800 years or more

[1] As a matter of fact every student of Bible chronology knows that there are no sufficient data for computing the duration of this interval with any certainty at all. In Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* it is set down at "about 638 years." Clinton makes it 612 years. Josephus, who was a learned Jew, knew nothing of the above assumed principle of calculation, and reckons the period at 592 years, which accords with certain chronological statements made by St. Paul, in reference to this interval in Acts xiii. 18–20 (see Alford). Other authorities give different computations, resource being had to conjecture in all cases.

[2] *The Coming Prince*, chap. vii., p. 83. (We quote from the 3rd edition.)

after the sixty-ninth week, to the close of this dispensation. Surely the reader must see that this is nothing but an attempt to build one hypothesis upon another, there being in reality no solid foundation for either.

Another argument still more palpably fallacious has recently been put forward in a prophetical magazine, by a Futurist writer, in support of the gap-theory. We give the argument in the writer's own words:—"*From Abraham's birth to the Exodus.* Abraham was seventy-five years old when the promise (Gen. xii. 4) was made to him. The Law was given 430 years after (Exod. xii. 40; Gal. iii. 17). But 430 and 75 make 505 years, or fifteen years over the 490. How are we to account for this gap of fifteen years as forming part of the 505 years? The answer is that at Abraham's departure into Canaan (xii. 4) he was seventy-five years old, Ishmael was born ten years after (xvi. 3), therefore Abraham was eighty-five years old at Ishmael's birth. But he was one hundred years old when Isaac was born (xxi. 5). Therefore it follows that there were fifteen years (100–85=15) during which Ishmael was occupying and usurping the place of the promised seed; and 15 from 505 leaves 490. Here then we have the first of the seventy sevens connected with Daniel's people, and the first 'gap' of fifteen years."[1]

The general reader will scarcely, perhaps, have patience to test exactly the worth of the above line of argument, and may probably let it pass with the idea that there may be something in it. We think it can easily be shown, however, that there is really nothing in it but delusion. *If God's Word had stated that from Abraham's birth to the Exodus was* 490 *years*, then the fact that the interval was really 505 years might possibly be explained as above. *But there is no such statement in the Bible* as that the interval was 490 years. This is simply an insinuation of the writer. The whole argument, therefore, is clearly fictitious. Yet these are the grounds on which we are asked to accept the gap-theory, and to apply it to the seventy sevens, or 490 years of Daniel's prophecy.

But further than this, those who bring forward this imaginary principle of computing terms of years do not seem to perceive

[1] *Things to Come*, November, 1894.

that, if admitted, it would completely upset their own explanation of the prophecy. For if the principle of eliminating every period during which the Hebrew nation is cast off by God is, as these writers tell us, to be applied to the prophecy of the seventy weeks,—if, as one of them has stated it, "the Divine computation of Israelitish times may be obtained from human chronology by eliminating the periods during which Israel,—that is, every one of the Twelve Tribes,—is Lo-ammi (not my people)"[1] then, surely, since the Hebrew nation is not to be restored to God's favour and covenant till the time of national repentance when the Lord Jesus appears at the very end of this dispensation, to destroy His enemies and the power of the Antichrist, and to set up His own Kingdom,[2] it is obvious that the last seven years *just before* the end, which, according to these Futurist writers, are to witness the career of the individual Antichrist whom they expect, and who, they say, will make a covenant with the Jews, *are a part of the time of God's casting away of the Hebrew nation*, and so, according to their own theory, must be eliminated from the Divine reckoning in this prophecy, and cannot, therefore, constitute the postponed last "seven" of the seventy "sevens," as they would have us to believe. Thus, on every ground, this illogical theory breaks down.

It may seem superfluous to add anything more in refutation of this *gap-theory*, but it may nevertheless be worth while to notice what the author of the volume from which we have quoted puts forward as an argument which he considers a further and conclusive proof of it, derived from the words of our Lord in His celebrated discourse on the Mount of Olives as recorded in Matthew xxiv. Moreover, the exposure of the mistake of this line of argument will afford an opportunity of first saying something

[1] *The Seventy Sevens*, Part ii., p. 9.

[2] Cf. Rom. xi. 25–27: "A hardening in part hath befallen Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved; even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (R.V.). There are many other prophecies to the same effect.

in explanation of that interesting and important, but nevertheless difficult, prophecy.

Our Lord had just before pronounced His touching lamentation over Jerusalem, and had taken His solemn leave of the Temple. As they went out, the disciples, perplexed as to the meaning of the words they had heard Him say to the Jews, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate," directed His attention to the magnificent and massive masonry of the Temple buildings. Then came the astounding utterance—"See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down"—alluding, of course, to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.[1] Still more perplexed they walked on towards Bethany, and as they ascended the road over the Mount of Olives, when our Lord sat down for awhile, "over against the Temple," the disciples availed themselves of the opportunity to inquire further: "Tell us when shall these things be?"—the expression "these things" clearly referring, as commentators are agreed, to the overthrow of the Temple buildings at the destruction of Jerusalem, of which our Lord had been speaking.[2] The added question in Matthew—"and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"—shows, as Alford remarks, that the apostles were labouring under the mistaken idea that the overthrow of Jerusalem, of which Christ had been speaking, was immediately connected with His second coming and the end of the world, or age, of the present dispensation.

In our Lord's prophetic reply these two events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Advent, of which the former, regarded as a visitation of judgment, may be considered as a type of the latter, are blended together, sometimes one, sometimes the other, being more especially alluded to. It is not

[1] Matthew xxiv. 2. Josephus tells us how strikingly this was fulfilled at the close of the siege. What was left by fire of the Temple buildings, on which our Lord and His disciples were gazing on this occasion, was so completely demolished and "thrown down," by the orders of the Roman Emperor, that the historian says of the whole area of city and temple "a traveller would never believe that it had been inhabited" (*Wars*, vii. i. § i.).

[2] Compare the three records: Matthew xxiv. 1–3, Mark xiii. 1–4, Luke xxi. 5–7.

always easy to define exactly how far His words refer to each or both. A typical event does not correspond in every detail with its antitype, but only in certain characteristic features. Hence in a prophecy containing a description of two such related events, there will be found some points of detail which refer only to one or the other, while more general characteristics will be described in terms which apply more or less to both of them.[1]

Speaking generally, then, we may say that the section at the beginning of the prophecy, namely, Matthew xxiv. 4–14, may be regarded as an introduction to the whole, and the descriptions apply in the first place to the interval between the time of Christ and His typical visitation of judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem; but the terms frequently also point on for their full realisation to the time of Christ's second coming and the judgments then to be poured out.

The next section, verses 15–20, *containing the reference to the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel*, is clearly shown by the nature of its contents to belong to the disastrous era of *the siege of Jerusalem*, as we shall presently show more at large.

In the next section, verses 21–28, we enter upon what we may call a transition stage of the prophecy, and the Second Advent of Christ begins to come more clearly into view. The prophecy speaks, indeed, of the tribulation at the siege of Jerusalem, but, since that was a type of the greater tribulation yet to come, the

[1] See Alford and Lange on this point. As regards typical events foreshadowing our Lord's Second Advent, it should be observed that the Transfiguration was the type of His coming *for* His saints, while the destruction of Jerusalem foreshadowed the judgments that will be poured out in connection with His coming *with* His saints. The former stage of His coming is that foretold in 1 Thessalonians iv., when dead saints will be raised and living saints transformed,—Moses in the Transfiguration scene symbolising those raised from the dead, and Elijah those transformed whilst living. Hence we see the meaning of our Lord's words: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John . . . and was transfigured before them." The destruction of Jerusalem, which marked the close of the Jewish dispensation, was, as we have said, a type of the judgments that will be poured out upon the earth at the close of the present dispensation, when Christ will come *with* His saints, as described in Revelation xix., to overthrow His enemies and set up His kingdom in this world. On these two stages of Christ's coming see further, pages 259, 381.

language also points on to this latter event. It tells us of the sensational rumours that accompanied the former epoch of consternation, and which will again accompany the latter. And though, in verse 27, where the comparison to the *lightning flash* shows that when Christ comes it will not be a matter of rumour, but a fact evident to all, and the allusion to the *carcase* indicates that special judgment will fall upon special scenes of corruption, there may still linger a preliminary reference to the circumstances of the siege of Jerusalem; yet the language clearly has its main fulfilment at the second coming of Christ.

And thus the prophecy leads up to a description of this latter momentous crisis which follows in the next section, verses 29–31, where the circumstances that will accompany our Lord's Second Advent are portrayed in the most vivid and solemn language.

Next, verses 32–35, there follows a proverbial warning to be in expectation and readiness, which is applicable more or less to both events.

The remainder of chapter xxiv., together with chapter xxv., as far as verse 30, is concerned with the Second Advent alone. While in the concluding section of the prophecy, chapter xxv., verse 31 to the end, the Lord passes on in His prophetic view of the future to the still more distant crisis of the time of the great general judgment at the end of His Millennial reign.[1]

If any one will read these two chapters of St. Matthew by the guidance of these sign-posts, so to speak, we think it will tend to remove much of the difficulty and confusion which at first sight seem to pervade the prophecy.

Let us now notice more particularly that part of the prophecy which contains our Lord's allusion to "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet." These words occur in the second section of the prophecy, chapter xxiv., verses 15–20, and, as we have already pointed out, the contents of that passage show clearly that the siege of Jerusalem is what our Lord is speaking of. The reader has only to turn to the parallel passage in Luke xxi. 20, and he will see that the warning signal for those in Judæa to flee to the mountains, which is mentioned in Matthew as,

[1] This last passage will be found more fully explained, p. 464.

"When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place," etc., is, in Luke, "When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies," etc. Thus, whether we regard the "*abomination* of *desolation*" mentioned by Matthew and Mark as meaning *the same thing* as the *idolatrous* and *desolating* Roman "armies" spoken of by Luke, which is the view of Lange, Birks, and others, or whether, as Alford and others think, the *inner* sign is given by Matthew and Mark, consisting of some act of desecration of the Temple by the Zealots during the siege, whilst Luke records the *outer* sign of the investment by the Roman armies, it must surely be evident to all that the *time* referred to by our Lord in these words is *the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans*, a point to which we would draw especial attention for reasons that will presently appear.[1]

Similarly the "tribulation" (or "distress," Luke), of which our Lord speaks in this passage, Matthew xxiv. 21, is shown by the very terms of the description to apply to the same time. This may easily be seen by comparing the three accounts. After speaking of the distressing circumstances of the flight from Jerusalem during the siege, our Lord adds, in Matthew and Mark, "For there shall be great tribulation," etc. In the corresponding passage of Luke we read: "For there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be *led captive to all nations*," etc.—language which clearly belongs to the epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

It should be noted that our Lord in His prophetic description of the tribulation that would befall the Jews at this crisis seems to borrow, as pointed out by Alford and others, the words of Daniel xii. 1, where the prophet is speaking, not of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, but of the Great Tribulation which is to take place at the close of this age, in

[1] We have previously explained the meaning of the prophetic formula "abomination of desolation" (see p. 56), and have shown that it is used with reference to several historical crises by Daniel, and that in the prophecy of the seventy weeks the very phrase is used in the LXX. version in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, which is here quoted by Christ from that prophecy with reference to the same event.

which the Jews are again to be specially involved. This is only in accordance with what we have already explained with regard to the blending of type and antitype in prophecy. The miseries of the siege of Jerusalem were a type of the final Great Tribulation, and therefore a general description of the latter is also capable of application to the former crisis. It is necessary to draw attention to this point because, as we shall show presently, some Futurist writers make use of this allusion to Daniel's words by our Lord, and mistakenly argue from it, as if our Lord were here speaking of the final tribulation, and not of the tribulation at the destruction of Jerusalem.[1]

To prevent confusion, it should be noticed that there are three periods of tribulation alluded to in this prophecy of our Lord upon the Mount of Olives. (1) The special time of tribulation for the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem. (2) The long tribulation of that nation while "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). (3) The intensified period of this tribulation at the end, in which the Jews especially, and also the world at large, or at least Christendom, will be more or less involved; in other words, the Great Tribulation that will take place at the close of this dispensation in immediate connection with the coming of Christ.

It is to this final tribulation, as we have previously explained, that we must refer the section of the prophecy beginning—"But immediately, after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken," etc. (Matt. xxiv. 29).

[1] The intensifying words, "no, nor ever shall be," added by our Lord to those of Daniel, are peculiarly suited to the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. *Such a siege as that*,—so long and terrible, and accompanied by such unparalleled horrors, of which Josephus says, almost in the words of Christ's prophecy, "All calamities from the beginning of time seem to me to shrink to nothing by comparison"—can never be again. The Jews, however, have yet to drink the last dregs of suffering both in their land and city as testified by many of the prophets. The last "time of Jacob's trouble" has yet to be fulfilled. And at this period, too, which will be in immediate connection with the Second Coming, the circumstances of the tribulation will mark it off as differing in important points of detail from all previous events of history, as testified both by Jeremiah and Daniel (Jer. xxx. 7; Dan. xii. 1)

Some have found difficulty in the words "immediately after," in the above passage. But there is really none, at all events with regard to the general meaning, as Alford, Lange, and other commentators have shown. In the previous verses Christ had distinctly spoken of His personal coming, and hence these words naturally refer to the Great Tribulation which will take place in immediate connection with that event. "When this tribulation has reached its climax, then *immediately* the great catastrophe will come" (Lange). Whether therefore, with some commentators, we *include* in the meaning the long period of the Jewish tribulation and treading down by the Gentiles of which St. Luke speaks, or whether, with others, we apply it *only* to the closing portion of that period which will constitute the Great Tribulation, the point of the prophecy comes to the same thing. It means that when the Great Tribulation has come to its head, when the great moral and social earthquake, which revelation foretells, is taking place in the world, when the strata of society are being upheaved, when thrones are tottering and governments falling, when the sun and moon shall be darkened and the stars shall fall from heaven (the idea of accompanying physical phenomena, such as an eclipse, or a great shower of falling meteors, being also possibly included)—*then*, immediately after that point of the tribulation shall have been reached, the *King* will come "on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" to set up His kingdom upon earth.

The reader is now in a position to judge of the worth of the argument which the Futurist author from whom we have quoted puts forward as a final proof of the *gap-theory* derived from the prophecy on the Mount of Olives. It may be well to cite the argument in his own words as an example of the mistaken reasoning accompanied by dogmatic assertion which is unfortunately only too common amongst writers of the Futurist school. He says, in a passage immediately following what we have previously refuted: "But this conclusion [*i.e.* of the truth of the *gap-theory* based upon the 480 years of 1 Kings vi. 1] does not depend upon argument however sound, or inference however just [!] It is indisputably proved by the testimony of Christ Himself. 'What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?'

the disciples inquired as they gathered round the Lord on one of the last days of His ministry on earth (Matt. xxiv. 3). [It should be noticed that this writer omits the first part of their question, 'Tell us when shall these things be?' which, as we have already explained, obviously referred to *the destruction of the Temple by the Romans.* These words are essential in order to understand the question of the disciples and our Lord's reply; but they do not suit the writer's argument, which requires the fulfilment at the destruction of Jerusalem to be kept in the background.][1] In reply He spoke of the tribulation foretold by Daniel (Matt. xxiv. 21; Dan. xii. 1) [assertions followed by bare Scripture references are often very misleading. Texts require to be examined and their context to be noted. We have shown that the 'tribulation' of Matthew xxiv. 21 is a different event from that specified in Daniel xii. 1, the former being connected with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the latter with the time of the first resurrection at the end of this dispensation], and warned them that the signal of that persecution [the two tribulations are here confounded as if they were one and the same] was to be the prime event which marks the middle of the seventieth week, namely, the defilement of the holy place by the 'abomination of desolation.'" Here is a twofold error. We have shown in our examination of the clause of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks that what marks the middle of the seventieth week is something quite different, namely, the accomplishment of Christ's atoning work upon the cross, and the establishment of the new covenant thereby. Moreover, as we have already pointed out, the signal of the "abomination of desolation," and the "tribulation" following, of which our Lord spoke in Matthew xxiv. 15–21, so far from marking the middle of the seventieth week, do not fall within the era of the seventy weeks at all, for they are obviously connected by our Lord with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which by no calculation can be brought within the seventy weeks, but, as we have shown in our exposition of Daniel's prophecy, is introduced episodically, as the

[1] We do not, of course, mean to imply any dishonest intention, but only to show how a disputant under strong feeling is led, inconsistently as it were, to overlook what tells against his theory.

punishment to fall on the Jews some forty years afterwards, for their crime perpetrated in the middle of the seventieth week, the crucifixion of their Messiah.

The writer goes on to explain the abomination of desolation as being some image of Antichrist, probably, "which the false prince will set up in the Temple in violation of his treaty obligations to respect and defend the religion of the Jews." All this is purely imaginary, and based upon a wrong interpretation of a part of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, as we trust we have already made clear to our readers.[1]

Next we have the following confident assertion by that author: "That this prophecy was not fulfilled by Titus is as certain as history can make it." And in proof of this statement we are referred to Josephus. (*Wars*, vi. 2, § 4). But if the reader will look at that passage, he will find that it is nothing to the point, and no proof at all that our Lord's prophecy was not fulfilled by Titus. It is simply a speech of Titus to the Jews in which he alludes to their defiling their sanctuary, and trampling upon dead bodies in their Temple. Of course Josephus makes no mention of any false prince setting up his image in the Temple, or of any treaty with the Jews about their religion; but neither does the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel, as we have shown, nor does our Lord in this prophecy on the Mount of Olives. We trust that the proof already given has made it clear to our readers that the contrary of the above assertion is the truth, and that "it is as plain as history can make it," that our Lord's words in this part of the prophecy, about the "tribulation" and the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet," *were* fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem. And we will add a yet further proof of this from Josephus, a passage which our author omits to mention. In Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, on "abomination of desolation," we are told: "The prophecy referred ultimately (as Josephus himself perceived, *Ant.*, x. 11., § 7) to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans." In this passage of Josephus, which is also cited by Alford and other commentators, the historian, after

[1] See p. 77. We shall show that there is no warrant in Scripture for any rebuilding of the Temple in this dispensation, still less of any Antichrist sitting in it, or putting up his image there. On this, see p. 240, note.

alluding to the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy of "the abomination of desolation" by Antiochus Epiphanes, says: "*In the very same manner* Daniel also wrote concerning the *Roman* government, and that our country should be made *desolate* by them."[1]

Thus, by confusing the *tribulations* spoken of by our Lord in Matthew xxiv., in a manner likely to escape the notice of the general reader, and by misinterpreting Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, and also our Lord's reference to it, as we trust we have clearly shown, this writer, step by step, grounding one error upon another, leads up to his final assertion, positively stated as usual, that "the inference is incontestable that the events of the seventieth week belong to a time still future."

We trust we have made plain to our readers both the fallacy of the argument and the falseness of the conclusion; and that the testimony of our Lord in Matthew xxiv., instead of being the final and "indisputable proof" of the *gap-theory* as asserted, is rather the last touch, if such were wanted, to cause the fabric of that theory to crumble to pieces.

Since the *gap-theory* has now been shown to have no foundation in Scripture, it may seem superfluous to refute the argument in favour of it which some have attempted to derive from early writings in the Church. But it may be well briefly to notice this point, because Futurists confidently appeal to the early Fathers, as if they unanimously supported the *gap-theory*. Thus one of them says that it "was taught by all the earlier Fathers who mention it; for they separate the final seven years from the four hundred and eighty-three, and insist that the Antichrist will sit in the Temple at Jerusalem, and be worshipped as God during the last three years and six months of the age"—giving for his authorities *Iren. adv. Hær.*, Book V., chap. xxx. 4; Hippol., *Christ and Antichrist*, chap. lxi.[2]

How thoroughly misleading such a statement is, may be seen by a reference to Elliott's careful and excellent review of patristic

[1] The prophetic formula of "the abomination of desolation" has already been explained. See p. 56.

[2] *The Seventy Sevens*, p. 12. Similarly the author of *The Coming Prince* says, p. 86: "Such was the belief of the early Church."

prophetical literature given in the fourth volume of the *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, p. 304, etc. (5th Ed.). He shows that Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Tatian, all before the end of the second century, either directly or by inference explained Daniel's seventy weeks as a *continuous* period, though the details of their calculations are often confusing. He says they all, "and also Julius Africanus at the commencement of the third century, explained Daniel's seventy Hebdomads, and their abomination of desolation, as having had their full accomplishment on Christ's death, and the consequent desolation of Jerusalem by the Roman armies; and so having no reference whatever to the then future Antichrist. Nor of the few who, with Irenæus and Hippolytus, referred that last Hebdomad and its abomination of desolation to the end of the world and Antichrist, do I find that any but *Hippolytus* expounded the seventieth and last Hebdomad as broken off from the preceding sixty-nine by a great chronological gap." It is true that Irenæus, who wrote towards the close of the second century, refers the last half of the last Hebdomad to the career of an individual Antichrist at the end of this dispensation, but in his brief remarks there is nothing to show how he connected it with the previous period, or when he calculated the seventy weeks to have begun.

The testimony of Julius Africanus, who, at the beginning of the third century, as we have said, wrote expressly on chronology, and who is quoted by Eusebius, is directly against the *gap-theory*. He says: "It is by calculating from Artaxerxes up to the time of Christ that the seventy weeks are made up." Jerome also, in his commentary on Daniel ix., quotes Julius Africanus to the same effect.[1] Indeed, Elliott says: "Hippolytus stands alone in the exprest view of the sixty-nine Hebdomads reaching to Christ's first coming, and the seventieth beginning separately, after some vast chronological gap, just before His second coming."

Such an error may well be excused in Hippolytus, for, as we have previously remarked, these early writers had not the materials that we have—the light of history, and more exact chronology—to enable them to form correct judgments upon either the prophecy of the seventy weeks or the question of the

[1] See *Divine Programme*, by Dr. Grattan Guinness, p. 340, note.

Antichrist. In those early days a cloud of mystery hung about these prophecies. And especially, with regard to the time of the appearance of the Papal Antichrist, and the length of its career of evil and mischief which was to precede the coming of the Lord, it was necessary that this should be veiled in obscure language which they could only imperfectly understand, in order that the hope of the Church in the deliverance to be brought by Christ might not be quenched by the despair that comes of long delay. Hence we need not be surprised if they made mistakes in calculating chronological periods, or in the interpretation of symbolical prophecies. But the cloud of uncertainty has gradually lifted. The course of history has brought further light as years have rolled on, and we who are living in these latter days are able to discern the truth more clearly, and to understand what was all mystery to them.

An exaggerated and mistaken estimate of patristic authority has been a fruitful source of error both in matters of doctrine and in the interpretation of prophecy. Their writings require to be judged with much caution, and careful testing by the Word itself. Many of their expositions are highly fanciful. This especially applies to their ideas about the Antichrist. Thus, for example, Irenæus, in the latter half of the second century, argues that since Noah was six hundred years old at the time of the deluge, and since Nebuchadnezzar's image was sixty cubits high and six cubits broad, we may take these numbers together as indicating the number of the name of Antichrist given in the Revelation, six hundred and sixty-six! Again, after explaining, as if it must refer to a future Antichrist, the oft-quoted text, "another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive"—a text which has repeatedly been fulfilled by false Messiahs, who have presented themselves to the Jews, and which therefore cannot require any such interpretation, he says: "This [*i.e.*, Antichrist] is also the unjust judge, who feared not God nor regarded man, to whom the widow, that is the earthly Jerusalem, fled to be avenged of her adversary!" Well may Archbishop Trench call this "a strange interpretation."[1]

[1] *Irenæus*, Book V., chaps. xxv. and xxix. (T. & T. Clark.) *Trench on the Parables*, p. 494. (12th Ed.)

Hippolytus, who was probably a disciple of Irenæus, adopts the above exposition, and as an example of his own we may instance his comparison of the Church to a ship carrying *the cross of Christ*, because he says, "her prow is the east, and her stern is the west, and her hold is the south"! And he further compares the shrouds, by which ascent is made to the yards, to "the passion of Christ, which brings the faithful to the ascent of heaven," and the top-sails to the "prophets, martyrs, and apostles." In Jacob's well-known prophecy concerning Judah's growth to pre-eminence as a formidable power, Hippolytus says that the expression, "he stooped down, he couched as a lion," refers to "the three days' sleep (death, couching) of Christ," adding: "And Jacob says, 'Who shall rouse him up?' And this is just what David and Paul both refer to, as when Paul says, 'And God the Father who raised him from the dead.'" Surely such exposition as this is contrary to sober judgment and common-sense interpretation. We may add that the reasoning by which he seeks to show from the same prophecy of Jacob that the Antichrist would prove to be an individual of the tribe of Dan, a favourite theory amongst Futurists, is equally fanciful and unsound.[1]

Hippolytus, as we have noted, is a chief support of the Futurist theory of a *gap* in the seventy weeks, and also of a future individual Antichrist. But surely the above examples—and more might be added of the same kind—are enough to show that this good bishop and martyr is not a safe guide for the interpretation of obscure or symbolic prophecies. Yet we are often asked to accept his prophetic exposition concerning the Antichrist as if it was almost of apostolic authority.

It is due to Hippolytus to state that he made no such claim for himself. On the contrary, he was fully aware of the risk he ran of making mistakes, and accordingly he thus prefaces his exposition in the spirit of true humility: "These things, beloved, we impart to you with fear, and yet readily, on account of the love of Christ, which surpasseth all. For if the blessed prophets who preceded us did not choose to proclaim these things, though they knew them, openly and boldly, lest they should disquiet the

[1] Hipp., *Treatise on Antichrist*, chaps. lix. and viii. (T. & T. Clark.)

souls of men, but recounted them mystically in parables and dark sayings, speaking thus: 'Here is the mind which hath wisdom,' how much greater risk shall we run in venturing to declare openly things spoken by them in obscure terms."[1]

These words deserve especial attention, because Futurists are wont to appeal to Irenæus, Hippolytus, and others, as if it might be inferred that their interpretation of the prophecies concerning the Antichrist in the Book of Revelation had been handed down from St. John himself. Whereas it seems clear from the above admissions of Hippolytus that St. John did not undertake to unfold the meaning of the symbolic visions which he witnessed. Indeed, there is no reason for believing that St. John himself knew their meaning, as Hippolytus imagines he did. Like the Old Testament prophets, of whom St. Peter speaks, it is probable that St. John was commissioned by God to record a complex and far-reaching prophecy in mysterious terms, the scope of which could only have been very dimly perceived by himself. Indeed, the early Fathers were in this respect placed at a disadvantage compared with us who are living in the latter days, because, as we have said, it seems evident that God veiled these prophecies purposely in obscure language, so that their meaning might only become gradually revealed by the light of history, and especially so as the time of the end should draw nigh.

The writings of Hippolytus are deeply interesting as those of a good man feeling after the meaning of dark predictions before history had begun to shed its light upon their fulfilment; but we must be careful not to follow him in all his conclusions, or to adopt his mistakes in the interpretation of symbolic prophecies.

Before closing our criticism of the *gap-theory*, it may be well to notice briefly one more line of argument which is sometimes brought forward by Futurists in support of it, namely, the silence which they assert to exist in Old Testament prophecy with regard to the events of this dispensation.

This view forms a prominent topic in a small book of prophecy which has recently appeared. The fallacies of Futurists seem endless, and it is a remarkable fact that the great number of

[1] Hipp., *A Treatise on Antichrist*, ch. xxix.

prophetical tracts, pamphlets, periodicals, papers, etc., which have been circulated of late years, have issued chiefly from Futurist sources, and so have largely contributed to propagate Futurist errors.

The argument of the work referred to is to this effect. The writer devotes considerable space to emphasise what all prophetical students are aware of, namely, that the Old Testament prophets in their allusions to the future were wont to blend the two comings of Christ—that in humiliation and that in glory—into one. Indeed, for the most part, they seem to lose sight of the former in contemplating the splendour of the latter. Moreover, it is perfectly true, as this writer urges, that "the Old Testament prophecies primarily concern Israel." But from these facts the writer draws erroneous and illogical conclusions. He first states the proposition that "the history or duration of the Christian dispensation was not revealed to the prophets 'of old time.'" Now this statement is ambiguous. And ambiguity is a frequent source of fallacy. If the writer means that no *detailed* history, or *clear* prediction of the duration of this dispensation, understood by the prophets themselves, was given to them, his statement is true. But if he means that *nothing* that was to transpire in the history of the present dispensation, and that *no indication* of its duration was revealed to them, which, though they might not fully understand, they were, nevertheless, to record for those that should come after, the statement is false, as we shall show. From this ambiguous premiss he draws the following erroneous conclusion: "This view necessarily sets aside the traditional and generally accepted opinion which has come down to us from the pious fathers of the Reformation—that the little horn represents Popery."[1]

It will not be difficult to show that the fathers of the Reformation were more correct in their interpretation of prophecy, and in understanding its scope, than Futurist writers who put forward this argument. The fact that the Old Testament prophecies *primarily* concern Israel does not in the least interfere with the fact that things which concern the Gentiles and the Christian dispensation are *also* introduced into some of them. Take, for

[1] *Proposal of Truce*, pp. 8, 71.

example, the prophetical hints of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Church of God, and the outpouring of the gift of the Spirit upon all believers,—blessings that evidently relate to the history of the present dispensation.

We may quote, as instances, St. James' application of the prophecy of Amos ix. 11, 12, to the work of evangelizing the Gentiles which was then beginning, and was destined to last through this dispensation till its perfection at the Second Advent (see Acts xv. 17, Alford). Similarly in Acts ii. 39, St. Peter explains the meaning of the prophecy from Joel, which he had previously quoted (ii. 17, etc.), as applying to the gathering of the Christian Church throughout this dispensation (see Alford). So, again, St. Paul, in Romans ix., x., and xi., quotes the Old Testament prophets as foretelling the great work of bringing into the Church Gentile believers, together with a remnant from amongst the Jews —a work which was to go on throughout this dispensation till the Deliverer should come out of Zion. Clearly, therefore, the Old Testament prophets *did* reveal events which related to the Gentiles and to the history of this dispensation. There is, therefore, no *à priori* reason whatever why the rise of such a terrible enemy to God's people as the Papacy during the present dispensation should not be a subject of Old Testament prophecy.

But further than this, it must be obvious to any reader that there is a marked difference between Daniel and the other Old Testament prophets. To him were granted visions, which read like history written beforehand, in the language of symbol. The two corresponding visions especially, that of the Image and that of the four Beasts, bear on the face of them the fact that they are a *continuous* symbolic representation of the four great world empires that were to follow each other in succession, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, extending through this dispensation, and reaching up to the actual coming of Christ, to supersede them all by setting up His own universal empire.

No such thing as a great blank during the present dispensation is figured either in the Image or in the vision of the four Beasts. On the contrary, the Image contains a remarkable *political* revelation concerning this dispensation, symbolically indicated by the division of the toes, which has been strikingly and ob-

viously fulfilled in history, namely, that the Roman Empire in the latter part of its existence would enter upon a subdivided condition of separate kingdoms, and further, it was revealed by the symbol of the iron and the clay that the strength of autocratic rule would become counteracted and lessened by the development of democratic power. All this has come true, as witnessed by the history of Europe.

So also the vision of the four Beasts gives a continuous representation of the history of the world during the same period, namely, from the Babylonian to the end of the Roman Empire in its last form. And as the Image in its last portion contained a remarkable *political* revelation concerning this dispensation, so the fourth Beast, or Roman Empire, contained in its last condition, that of subordinate kingdoms, a striking prophecy, more particularly affecting *the Church*, of a terrible, presumptuous, persecuting power, which should arise and play the part of supreme ruler in that empire, and not be finally extinguished till the coming of Christ. This, too, has come true; witness the history of the Papacy. We shall prove this more fully later on.

Again, though the *duration* of this dispensation was not *clearly* revealed to the Old Testament prophets, yet *hints* were thrown out that it would be for "many days." And to Daniel especially, as the apocalyptic prophet of the Old Testament dispensation, it was given to foretell, by a symbolic formula, varied in a mysterious manner, that the characteristic period (or "time of prospering," as Elliot expresses it) of the terrible, persecuting, and presumptuous power, that was to arise and afflict the saints of God, would be 1,260 years. This also has been verified in the most striking manner by the Papacy in the course of the present dispensation, as we shall hereafter show.

Therefore the Futurist view which we have noticed, claiming for itself that it "necessarily sets aside the opinion that the little horn represents the Papacy," is shown to be wrong both on logical and historical grounds, and no support for the *gap-theory* whatever can be obtained from it.[1]

We may add that Futurist writers frequently draw mistaken

[1] For a further refutation of this mistaken argument about there being no revelation in the Old Testament concerning this dispensation, see p. 164.

conclusions by implying that the prophets of old must have understood what they were commissioned to utter. We know, from 1 Peter i. 10–12, that their understanding was often dim and imperfect. With regard to many important events, it was God's purpose and method that the predictions concerning them should be given in mysterious language, the full meaning of which should be gradually unfolded as time went on. This feature of prophecy has been ably and clearly demonstrated by Dr. Grattan Guinness in the *Approaching End of the Age*. It is, therefore, often misleading to argue that the prophet must have understood this or that with regard to the prophecy which he delivered.

We have now reviewed the *gap-theory* at length, as was necessary in the case of a tenet which forms such an important foundation for the Futurist system of prophetic interpretation, and we trust we have made it plain that the theory in question is an altogether erroneous one.

PART II

CONTRAST OF THE HISTORICAL AND FUTURIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL AND THE REVELATION

INTRODUCTORY

At the Meeting of the Prophecy Investigation Society, April 21, 1893, the subject for consideration was *The Eighth Head of the Beast*, or the *Antichrist*. It was opened by a paper from the *Futurist* point of view, of which a printed *Abstract* had been previously furnished by the opener, giving a brief outline of the points of his argument.

The paper read in reply by the author of the present volume, giving the *Historical* interpretation as opposed to that of Futurists, forms the basis of the first two chapters of this Second Part. The substance of that paper is here given, but in a much expanded form. Advantage has been taken of the present opportunity to add many points of detail, and to explain more fully what before had been of necessity too much compressed.

As the *Abstract* above mentioned will be hereafter referred to, it appears desirable to give it below in full; more especially as it contains an able summary of the subject from the Futurist point of view. The reader will thus be able to compare the argument point by point with the answer given in these pages, and he will thus be the better able to judge for himself how far the present writer has succeeded in showing the *Futurist* position to be wrong, and in establishing the truth of the *Historical* interpretation.

ABSTRACT.

By the Opener of the Discussion.

The Eighth Head of the Beast.

"The eighth head of the Beast is declared in Revelation xvii. 11 to be identical with the beast in its final manifestation, and also to be one of the seven heads.

"The history of the Beast, as given in the Revelation, brings out clearly the following important facts:—

"1st. He is an Individual Human Being. The personal pronouns 'he' and 'him' are continually used. His number, 666, is 'the number of a man.' He makes war with the two witnesses who act, die, and rise again as men (chapter xi.). He has a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies (xiii. 5). He is said to possess a kingdom (xvi. 10). The ten horns are ten kings who reign with him (xvii. 12). He leads the kings and their armies against Christ and His armies (xix. 19). In his final doom he is cast alive into lake of fire (xix. 20). This strong array of testimony that the eighth head of the Beast is an individual man is in accord with all the rest of Bible testimony concerning this same being.

"2nd. He is Mightily Endued with Satan's Power. He 'cometh up out of the abyss' (Rev. xi. 7 and xvii. 8). His likeness to the devil in the seven heads and ten horns is obvious. The dragon (*i.e.* the devil, chapter xii. 9) 'gave him his power, and seat, and great authority' (chapter xiii. 2). Can we fail to identify this man with him 'whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders?' (2 Thess. ii. 9).

"3rd. He is the Leader of the Word-Power in its Opposition to God. Identity of the eighth head with the Beast, illustrated by the identity of Christ with His people. The Beast clearly denotes the world-power, and while presented in the Revelation in the time of the fourth beast of Daniel, he also bears some likeness to each of Daniel's former beasts—the leopard, the bear, and the lion (Rev. xiii. 2). The seven heads of the Beast are declared to be seven kings. The words 'kings' and 'kingdoms' appear to be used interchangeably in Daniel vii. 17 and 23. There have been seven universal, God-opposed monarchies. Five had fallen before John's time: these were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. One, viz., Rome, was holding sway when John prophesied, and one more, viz., the Germanic-Slavonic empire, had not then come, but followed, in its beast-like state (*i.e.*, its God-opposed state) only for a short time. The deadly wound was the national acceptance of Christianity under Constantine. As the eighth head is of the seven, may we not look for a restoration of the old pagan power under the leadership of the personal Antichrist? The Beast then described as of scarlet colour, and full of names of blasphemy (xvii. 3).

"4th. He is Associated with Satan in Persecution of the Church of Christ. Among those who have part in 'the first resurrection' are martyrs during the time of Beast's power (xx. 4). Satan's persecutions continue during same period. After removal of the Man-Child, which is identical with the rapture of first-fruits (xiv. 1–5), xii. 13, 14, 17.

"5th. The Beast and the Image made in his Honour are

WORSHIPPED (7). This is connected with Devil-worship (Rev. xiii. 4, 8, 15–17).

"6th. HE IS JOINED BY THE TEN KINGS IN THE OVERTHROW OF CORRUPTED CHRISTIANITY AS AN ORGANIZED POWER (xvii. 16, 17).

"7th. HIS TIME OF GREAT POWER IS LIMITED TO THE LAST THREE YEARS AND A HALF BEFORE THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IS SET UP (Rev. xi. 3 ; xii. 6, 14 ; xiii. 5).

"8th. HE LEADS THE ARMIES OF THIS WORLD AGAINST JERUSALEM TO BATTLE. Jerusalem the place where witnesses are slain (xl. 8). Battle of Armageddon (xvi. 12–16) identified with Zechariah xiv. 2, 3.

"9th. HE IS OVERTHROWN BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE ARMIES FROM HEAVEN, and is cast with the false prophet into the lake of fire (xix. 11–20), where he still is a thousand years later (xx. 10)."

In the discussion on the above subject, after the reading of the papers, an objection was raised against the Historical view of the Papacy being the Antichrist of prophecy, as maintained by the present writer in his paper. It was urged that this could not be so, because that Power is represented in God's Word as being of an *infidel* character, which cannot be said of the Papacy. The two passages chiefly relied on for sustaining this objection were the description of the Antichrist in the Epistles of St. John, and also that given by St. Paul in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

As this objection is a very common one amongst Futurists, and as these two passages of Scripture are of crucial importance in connection with the subject of the Antichrist, a full answer to the objection has been given in the third chapter of this Part, and also an examination into the meaning of the passages of Scripture referred to.

The fourth chapter deals with other criticisms and objections against the truth of the Historical system.

The next two chapters contain an explanation, in more or less detail, of the meaning and structure of the difficult book of the Revelation; dealing more especially with the earlier introductory visions, and with the three sevenfold series of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials. Futurist interpretations will also

be presented in contrast, in order that the reader may be able to compare the two systems, and so to judge between them.

The remaining portion of the volume will be devoted to a consideration of the events connected with the coming of Christ, and will contain a brief sketch of His Millennial reign, together with a notice of the still more tremendous events that will mark the close of His reign, namely, the loosing of Satan from the Abyss, the final rebellion, the great general judgment, the re-constitution of this earth, and the entrance upon the eternal state.

CHAPTER I

THE QUESTION OF THE ANTICHRIST, OR BEAST OF THE REVELATION

In approaching this important subject, it is highly necessary to endeavour to do so, not in the spirit of an attempt to gain victory over opponents, but rather as an honest endeavour to find out what is the truth of God's prophetic Word.

It will be most conducive to fairness, to clearness, and, I hope, to conviction, if I try to notice all the points in the *Abstract* of the Futurist interpretation to which reference has already been made.

First, let us be clear as to the meaning of the symbol of a *Beast.* We naturally turn to Daniel vii., and we there find that the symbol of a Beast, or wild beast of prey, as Daniel uses the term, means a God-opposing universal or world-empire,—an empire rule exercised by stern force, on selfish principles, just as a wild beast acts. Daniel speaks of four of these Beasts, the first like a Lion, the second like a Bear, and the third like a Leopard. As to the fourth, he does not describe it as being like any particular animal, but speaks of it as a fierce and terrible monster with teeth of iron and nails of brass, together with the further important characteristic that "it had ten horns."

These four Beasts were to arise in succession, and it is very generally admitted that they symbolise the *Babylonian*, the *Medo-Persian*, the *Greek*, and the *Roman* Empires respectively. The point to be especially remembered is that in both his visions on this subject, namely, the vision of the Image and that of the four Beasts, Daniel describes the *fourth*, or *Roman* world-empire, as continuing, in one form or another, right up to the time of

Christ's coming, when it was to be swept away and succeeded by Christ's universal empire of peace.

These two visions, of the Image and of the Four Beasts, will be found further explained in the course of our inquiry, and it will be shown that the ten horns of the Fourth Beast, as well as the ten toes of the Image, symbolise that subdivision of the old Roman Empire into separate kingdoms which has existed for more than twelve centuries.[1]

It seems obvious that the prophecy of the Beast in the Revelation, which is admitted to have reference to Daniel's vision of the Beasts, must relate to the *fourth*,—that Roman Beast or world-empire which, as we have said, was to last till the coming of Christ,—since the other three had already passed away from supremacy when the prophecy in the Revelation was written. And it is in exact accordance with the well-known general law of prophecy (namely, that later predictions on the same subject may be expected to contain further developments and more definite descriptions than earlier ones) that the fourth Beast, or world-empire, which Daniel speaks of merely as a monster form, diverse from those preceding it, terrible and strong exceedingly, is presented by the fuller revelation given to St. John in two different aspects, first as a *Pagan* persecuting world-empire, and then, in its latest form, as a *Papal* persecuting world-empire. The proof of this will come out in the course of our inquiry. The former or Pagan empire-rule of Rome is symbolised in chapter xii. under the form of a Great Red Dragon, because through that empire-rule, in its Pagan stage, Satan acted against the saints openly, and in his own colours. The latter or Papal empire-rule of Rome is symbolically foreshadowed, in the visions of chapters xiii. and xvii., as a Beast of remarkable form. It is equally energised by Satan as the former, but its action is *disguised*, and so the Dragon form does not appear, but is substituted by another. St. John describes this new manifestation of the empire-rule of Daniel's fourth Beast as a composite creature, combining in itself the forms of the three preceding Beasts in Daniel—the Lion, the Bear, and the Leopard.

[1] For explanations of the Image, see p. 160. The Vision of the Beasts is noticed, p. 119, and fully explained, p. 165.

This remarkable form of the Roman Beast is represented to St. John in vision, as we see by comparing chapters xiii. and xvii., as being governed by its eighth head. This eighth head, as mentioned in the opening words of the *Abstract*, is spoken of in Revelation xvii. 11 as "the Beast." That is to say, the *head* in such expressions is regarded as the representative of the whole Beast or empire, and it is therefore spoken of as the Beast itself —just as Daniel addressed Nebuchadnezzar as being, or representing, in his own person the Babylonian world-empire when he said: "Thou, O king, art the head of gold." [1]

Further, this eighth head of the Beast is also described in that passage of the Revelation as one of the seven that had fallen previously; that is to say, as will be shown later on, it is the seventh head revived in a new and remarkable form, which is described in Revelation xiii. 3, "as though it had been smitten unto death, and his death stroke was healed." All these points will be further explained in the course of our inquiry, and the identity of this eighth head with the Papacy proved.

The first paragragh of the *Abstract* begins with the statement concerning the Beast: "He is an individual human being. The personal pronouns 'he' and 'him' are constantly used."

Before we enter, therefore, upon the details of our subject, it will be necessary in the first place to examine the important question of the use of *individual language* in this and other prophecies of the Antichrist. For all are pretty well agreed that the Beast of the Revelation is the same Power which is spoken of by Daniel as the Little Horn of the fourth Beast, by St. Paul as the Man of Sin, and by St. John in his epistles as the Antichrist.

This point—namely, the employment of *individual* language—appears in all the paragraphs of the *Abstract*, and is indeed the essential feature of the Futurist interpretation.

Now I suppose we should all admit that it is no unlikely thing that our Lord, in taking leave, so to speak, of His Church, if He

[1] As a further illustration of this way of speaking we may cite the following remark of the late Bishop Lightfoot. Referring to the position of the Emperor of Rome, he says: "If not in theory, at least in practice, he *was* the state." (*Historical Essays*, p. 31.)

knew that a terrific system of evil would be developed in that Church, would give them some *hint* about it, both for warning and for comfort.

And further, it will be admitted that if it were also God's purpose, as we can see it was, that the weary length of the night of this dispensation should be hidden in mystery, in order that the hope of the Lord's return might not be crushed out of sight, but remain an active, ever-living principle, in no other way could this purpose have been so well accomplished as by veiling the protracted course of the action of that terrible enemy of the Church under the figure of the action of an individual, and concealing the long years of its duration period by employing a mysterious measure of time, that was in itself capable either of a literal or figurative interpretation.

Moreover, it would follow, as a natural consequence of the use of such ambiguous and mysterious language, that in the earlier times, under the influence of hope as to the nearness of Christ's coming, and a shrinking from the idea of postponing that event almost indefinitely, the *individual* and *shorter* interpretation would be preferred. As time went on, doubts would arise. As century after century passed away, and as the growth of the Papal Power brought out with more and more distinctness the various characteristics of Antichrist, it was natural that a suspicion of their identity would arise. This suspicion, amongst Historical students of prophecy, has grown into a certainty. We are now able to discern all the features of the Man of Sin, and to recognise his history and actions in the Man who, throughout its existence has been the very impersonation of that system—the Pope of Rome.[1]

But, it may be asked, Granted that God might be *expected* thus to have veiled the long existence of this evil power, can it be shown that the individual language which He actually does use, when grammatically and reasonably interpreted, may be taken to apply to a *system or dynasty*, such as the Papacy? We answer that there is the highest authority for thus understanding it.

[1] On the characteristic in apocalyptic prophecy of *concealing* whilst *revealing*, see pp. 6, 134.

We have only to turn to that crucial passage of Scripture which is appealed to in the second paragraph of the *Abstract*—the well-known description of the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians ii.—and we shall see this point completely established. We there find exactly the same form of expression applied to *two* powers. The one is described as ὁ κατέχων, "he that restraineth"; the other as ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος, "he that opposeth and exalteth himself." In each case the definite article and the present participle is the Greek expression used. Moreover, the latter power is also called in the same passage "the Man of Sin," "the son of perdition," "the lawless one."

Now in Grimm's *New Testament Lexicon* (and we could not wish a better grammatical authority), "that which restraineth" (verse 6) is defined as "the power of the Roman Empire," and ὁ κατέχων, "he who letteth," or "one that restraineth" (R.V.), is explained to mean "the one in whom that power is lodged [or headed up, as we might say], *i.e.* the Roman Emperor." Therefore (and this is a most important point), the expression here does not mean the particular action of some one particular individual, but the action of a *System*, or *Power*, as illustrated and represented by whoever is at the head of it for the time being.

For centuries after St. Paul thus used the expression; and when emperor after emperor had passed away, the Fathers, both Latin and Greek, who *must* be accepted as judges of the meaning of the Greek language, thus interpreted "he that restraineth." The Latin Father Tertullian, commenting on the words "only there is one that restraineth now until he be taken out of the way," says, "Who is this but the estate of Rome?" The Greek Father, Chrysostom, explains St. Paul's words in the same way. He says of *that which restraineth* or *one that restraineth*: "This means the Roman rule: when it shall be taken out of the way, then shall he [Antichrist] be revealed."[1]

[1] Hom. iv. on 2 Thessalonians ii. This meaning of *the hindrance* will be more fully proved later on. See p. 187. As a further evidence we may quote here Jerome's remarkable words of warning. Speaking of *the Roman Empire* which was being invaded by the Goths, at the beginning of the 5th century, he writes, with obvious reference to St. Paul's prophecy: "*He who withheld* is being *taken out of the way*, and yet we do not perceive that Antichrist is at the doors."—*Ep. ad Ager.* 91. *Hor. Apoc.* i. 393.

Surely, then, it should be perfectly clear to everybody, that if "one that restraineth" may mean the old imperial power of Rome headed up in the *Cæsar* for the time being, then also the corresponding phrase, "one that exalteth himself" (which we have seen is the same as "the lawless one," "the man of sin"), may similarly mean the Papal imperial power of Rome headed up and represented by the *Pope* for the time being. That it *does* mean this we shall endeavour to prove later on.[1]

It was only natural that the early Fathers should avail themselves of what we have pointed out as the intentional ambiguity of such individual language. They shrank from the thought of a career of more than twelve centuries for this terrible power that should arise; and so, though they interpreted "he who restraineth" as applying to the *line of emperors*, they nevertheless interpreted "he who opposeth," etc., as referring to the lifetime of *some one individual.* But we, who have had the advantage of the light of history thrown upon such expressions, can see that as "he who restraineth" applied to the Power represented in the line of *Emperors* of Rome, so "he who opposeth and exalteth himself," together with kindred expressions, applies to the power represented by the *Popes* of Rome.

Hence, if a System or imperial Power may be thus prophetically and figuratively spoken of in individual language, it logically follows that the *actions* of that Power may be expressed in corresponding individual terms. In fact, all the actions and characteristics enumerated in the *Abstract* are but the expansion and logical outcome of the *individuality* of such expressions as "one that opposeth and exalteth himself," "the lawless one," "the man of sin," which, we have seen, may apply to an *imperial Power* headed up in *representative individuals succeeding one another throughout the course of its existence.*

We are now in a position to examine in detail the principal points presented in the *Abstract*, and we hope to demonstrate

[1] Full proof will be found on this point at p. 187. On this passage of 2 Thessalonians ii., Bishop Wordsworth well remarks: "As he that *letteth* is a public person or series of persons, so *is he that sitteth* also." The former denotes the succession of Emperors, the latter the succession of Popes.

that the Eighth Head of the Beast refers, not to some one individual yet to appear, as Futurists have been led to imagine from their mistaken interpretation of the individual language employed in these prophecies, but to the *Papacy*, the last headship of Daniel's fourth Beast or Roman Empire.

The next statement in the first paragraph of the *Abstract*, after that which we have already examined, is that "His number [or as it is also expressed, see Revelation xiii. 17, 18, 'the number of his name'], 666, is '*the number of a man*,'" suggesting, of course, that the reference must be to some single individual. As to this last phrase, Alford, comparing Revelation xxi. 17, shows that it means "counted as men count," referring to an ordinary way of calculation, in which a name is expressed by Greek numerals.[1] Others explain the expression to mean a number *designating a man*. Under any circumstances it cannot be taken to imply that the name is that of some one individual with no predecessor or successor. If the number 666 means a name designating an individual, it is that of the individual who throughout its existence represents the Papacy, namely, its head the Pope. We shall show presently how aptly this enigmatical designation corresponds to the head of the Papacy, when we explain the meaning of the number 666 in our exposition of Revelation xiii., where this expression occurs.[2]

The next point mentioned in the *Abstract* in support of the theory that the Antichrist of prophecy means some future individual is that "he *makes war* with the two witnesses who act, die, and rise again as men" (Rev. xi.). We shall hope to prove that this chapter of the Revelation, so far from upholding the above theory, constitutes a remarkable identification with the Papacy. And as to the particular expression here relied upon, history shows only too clearly how the Papal Power has ever *made war* against true "witnesses" for Jesus.[3] The same metaphorical use

[1] See Fausset in *Critical Commentary*, also *Cambridge Bible for Schools* where the same meaning is given.

[2] See p. 155.

[3] As an illustration of the Antichrist thus making war against the witnesses of "the truth as it is in Jesus," we may quote the words of the oath that has usually been administered to Romish bishops: "To the utmost of my power I will make war against (*oppugnabo*) the heretics." We know that "heretics"

of individual language which we have explained in its reference to the Papacy must in all consistency be applied to the *two witnesses in this* difficult chapter. We cannot in sober judgment think of some supernatural monster, the Beast, making war at some future time against two supernatural men, who kill their enemies by fire proceeding out of their mouths, but are nevertheless themselves killed by the Beast, and whose dead bodies are contemplated by persons "from among the peoples and tongues, and tribes, and nations" for three days and a half, when they suddenly come to life and ascend to heaven. The Historical interpretation, consistently with what has gone before, and with what follows, shows that this must be regarded as a symbolical or metaphorical prophecy, and history furnishes us with its remarkable fulfilment.

As this eleventh chapter of the Revelation is a specially difficult one, it may be useful before we go any further to offer a brief explanation of it, and also of the preceding tenth chapter which is intimately connected with it.

The structure of the Book of Revelation is well known to be complicated and difficult. We shall deal more fully with that matter later on, in our explanation of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials.[1] For our present purpose it will be sufficient to remark that, besides these three seven-fold series of visions, we find in the Revelation, (1st) *anticipatory* visions, or those which give a previous glance at events to which subsequent visions lead up; (2nd) *introductory* visions, or those whose purpose is to illustrate what immediately follows; and (3rd) *episodical* visions, or those which for some special reason are introduced in a manner interrupting the ordinary sequence. The visions of chapter x., and of the first portion of chapter xi., are of this latter nature. In chapter x. we have first an anticipatory announcement by an angel, who appears in the glorious majesty of Christ Him-

is the name applied by the Papal Antichrist to "*protestants*" or *witnesses* of the true Gospel of Christ. Thus the identification is complete.

[1] See p. 266, etc., where we speak more in detail concerning anticipatory visions, and the standpoint from which St. John beheld the visions, also of the earthly scene and the heavenly scene respectively.

self, relating to the sounding of the seventh Trumpet (*vv.* 1–7). This vision will be explained later on (p. 336) when we come to treat of the three connected seven-fold series, the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials. We shall there show that the sixth Trumpet describes the launching forth of the Turkish invasions of Christendom as a judgment from God upon wilful corruption of truth; while the seventh Trumpet foreshadows the era of judgments (more particularly detailed in the series of Vials) beginning with the French Revolution, and ending with the judgment of the Great Tribulation, immediately preceding the coming of Christ to set up His kingdom. Between these two Trumpet soundings,—that is to say, in the course of the period of the sixth Trumpet,—the great work of the *Reformation* was to be accomplished, and it is in order to illustrate *this*, and as unfolding the history of the Church, that the further episodical visions of the "little book open," chapter x. 8–11, the measuring of the Temple, chapter xi. 1, 2, and the Witnesses, chapter xi. 3–13, are introduced between the sixth and seventh Trumpets.[1]

These episodical visions relate to the preaching of the Gospel during the Papal period. A *closed* Bible has ever been the traditional policy of the Papacy, while an *open* Bible is the motto of the true Church of Christ. Therefore, as Professor Birks rightly explains it, the "little book *open*" in the hand of the angel in chapter x. is a symbolical prophecy of "the unfolding, and digestion, and open publication of the Word of God."[2] St. John in this vision is not merely a spectator—he is directed by the angel to take part in the drama. As a representative of God's faithful preachers he is told to leave his standpoint of observation, and to "go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel." The book proved sweet to the taste, but was afterwards followed by bitter effects. The *eating* refers to the study and reception of God's Word. This, as in the case of the message from God

[1] We have thought it better to reserve the consideration of the three seven-fold related visions of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, containing a revelation of further events of importance in the Church and the world during the present dispensation, till later on in this volume; so as the better to enable the reader to apprehend the proper succession of events, as unfolded in those connected visions.

[2] *Thoughts on Sacred Prophecy*, p. 6.

to Ezekiel,[1] is sweet and profitable. Nevertheless, in St. John's vision he was given to understand that the prophesying or preaching of the Gospel, which must follow the study of it, would be accompanied with the bitterness of persecution: "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it my belly was made bitter. And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings": *i.e.*, God's Word would have to be preached afresh in the world.

Chapter xi. is a further revelation in connection with the same subject. The scene of this chapter, as in the case of the preceding Trumpets, is contemplated by St. John as taking place upon the earthly landscape spread out in vision before him.[2] In vivid symbolical terms it portrays the conflict between the *false* and the *true* Church of Christ with regard to the preaching of the Gospel, which led up to the crisis of the Reformation, and the great victory of truth which then took place.

The measuring of the Temple, strictly, the Sanctuary, *vv.* 1, 2, contrasts these two Churches. The smaller *sanctuary*, or more holy part of the Temple, symbolised *true* Christianity. St. John is told to measure this, as being the special object of God's care: while as to the larger *outside court* he is told to "measure it not," as that which is rejected by God. Being profaned, it is in the vision classed with the popularised portion, "the rest of the holy city," Jerusalem, and thus symbolises the corrupt and *paganised* Christianity of the Church of Rome.[3] The holy city of Jerusalem was of old the representation and symbol of God's people. And as our Lord had spoken of the treading down of apostate Jerusalem by Gentiles, so, in this symbolic prophecy, the same description

[1] Ezek. iii. 3.

[2] For the distinction between the earthly and heavenly scenery of these visions, see p. 268.

[3] The "holy city" here spoken of must not be confounded, as has been done by many commentators, with "the great city," afterwards mentioned in verse 8. Rather they are opposite ideas. The "holy city," or Jerusalem, is used here in a *religious* sense; while "the great city" is employed in a *secular* sense, and is interpreted in the Book of Revelation as referring to the great Roman world-empire, represented by its metropolis, the symbolic Babylon, or Rome. See note, p. 112.

is used with a spiritual or mystical meaning ; and the profanation of the outer court, and treading down of "the holy city," which is spoken of, verse 2, was a symbolic prophecy of the *paganisation* that was to take place in the religion of the great multitude of those who *professed* to be God's people, during the long career of the Papal apostasy and corruption of the faith. The period of the treading down here mentioned, namely, "forty-two months," is the same as the 1,260 days in verse 3, and, as we shall explain in dealing with that verse, symbolises the characteristic period of the Papacy, the time of its chief flourishing, namely 1,260 years.

In connection with this point of the paganisation of Christianity, it is essential to remember that all the principal errors in the doctrine and practice of Roman Catholicism have their exact counterpart in the religions of *heathenism*, and can be traced back to ancient Babylon. The idolatrous exaltation of the *Queen of Heaven*, *relic-worship*, *idol processions*, *prayers for the dead*, *the Rosary*, *the worship of the Sacred Heart*, the needless use of *lamps* and *wax candles*, the *wafer*, *fasting communion*, *the sacrifice of the Mass*, the office of the *Pontiff*, the institution of *monastic orders* —these and other false teachings and practices can all be traced down from Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and so, through Pagan Rome, into Papal Rome.[1]

It was a sad fact, that soon after the nominal conversion of the Empire to Christianity, the great mass of Christendom became thus heathenised. There was always, however, a small inner section who were true children of God and "kept the testimony of Jesus," and these were symbolised to St. John by the measuring of "the sanctuary of God, and the altar," the latter word having special reference to the true doctrine of Christ's sacrifice of Himself "once for all," which became so corrupted and travestied by the false doctrine of the Mass. As for the rest, "the court which is without," the paganised professors of religion, God, as we have said, recognised them not. Tested by the "reed" St. John held in his hand, symbolising the rule of the true faith of the Gospel, they were worthless in His sight. So He bade His servant to "*measure it not*" (verse 2).

[1] This subject is worked out at length in a book of great research, entitled *The Two Babylons*, by Rev. A. Hislop.

Next under a new figure, that of the *Witnesses*, the persecution of those who *protest* or *witness* for the truth, is foreshadowed.

The two Witnesses are declared to be "the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth" (ch. xi. 4). The meaning of "candlesticks" in the Revelation is given by our Lord Himself as *Churches*.[1] The "olive trees" as shown by the prophecy in Zechariah iv., to which reference is obviously made, denote *leaders or teachers*.[2] Hence we see that "*the witnesses*" who are spoken of both as "candlesticks" and "olive trees," symbolise both *Churches or communities*, witnessing for the truth, and also the *leaders or ministers* of those Churches. *Two* is the number for a sure testimony, and it may also, as Elliott well shows, be taken to symbolise *the two lines* of witnessing Churches and pastors, those in the *East* and those in the *West*, amongst whom the Paulikians and Waldenses were conspicuous. These witnesses for the truth are compared to God's prophets of old, in their hair-cloth garments, "clothed in sackcloth." Their career is spoken of as coinciding with the characteristic period of the Papal Beast, who persecutes and seeks to destroy them, namely, 1,260 prophetic days, *i.e.* 1,260 years, as will be presently explained.[3] The allusion in verse 6 to the miraculous powers of Moses and Elijah is a vivid metaphor to teach that the same Divine power, which attested the witness of those prophets of old, continues to be at the back of those who stand up for "the truth as it is in Jesus." Lange, commenting upon the utter unreasonableness of the literal interpretation, well remarks that a slight examination of the New Testament will speedily convince us that historical facts such as these from the history of Elijah and Moses, which have since their very occurrence assumed a symbolic colouring, are just such as might be expected to be employed in allegorical descriptions.

The *finishing* of their testimony (ch. xi. 7) refers to the *completion*

[1] Revelation i. 20.

[2] See Dr. Pusey and Dr. Alexander on Zechariah. The "candlestick" in Zechariah's vision means the then existing Jewish Church; "the two olive trees" are Zechariah and Zerubbabel, or, as others think, Zechariah and Haggai, who were leaders and teachers in those times, and who typified those whom God uses to guide a nation or Church.

[3] See p. 134.

of their witnessing to the truth, especially manifested in their identification and denouncement of the Papal Antichrist, which by that time had become a prominent feature of their testimony.[1] When their witness thus came to a head, and in this sense was finished or completed, the hatred of the Papal Antichrist also culminated in a war of extermination against them. Rome determined to extirpate Gospel truth by persecution to the death. It is at this point that the apparent triumph of the Beast, or Papal Power, is foretold in the prophecy, namely, that he should "overcome them and kill them" (verse 7). In vivid metaphor we thus have brought before us, in this mysterious prediction, witnessing *completed*, witnessing *extinguished*, and, as we shall further see, witnessing *revived* in a triumphant manner.[2]

It is here that the history of the Reformation era throws remarkable light on the meaning of these symbols. Historians tell us how, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, public witness to the truth of the Gospel was "reduced to silence." At the fifth Lateran Council the Papal orator exulted at the complete victory of the Pope over Protestant heretics, and pronounced the well-known sentence, "Now nobody contradicts, no one opposes." Thus was fulfilled verse 8, "their dead bodies lie in the street

[1] This is a well-known meaning of the Greek word translated "finished." As applied to mere duration or existence it means cessation; but as applied to progress or development it may take the meaning of maturity or completeness. (See Grimm's *New Testament Lexicon.*) Elliott aptly cites the Greek Father Theodoret, who uses this word of the Jewish people *perfecting* or *completing* (not *ending*) their national sin in the crucifixion of Christ. So, in the present case, though the testimony of the Witnesses reached a crisis, a point of completion, it was not finished in the sense of being ended and no more heard of. On the contrary, it continued afterwards. The course of the witnessing for truth is represented in the prophecy as running parallel with that of the Papacy, the champion of antichristian error, and so the same characteristic period is assigned to it as that of the Papal prospering, namely, 1,260 years: "They shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (verse 3). Though past its period of prosperity, the Papacy is still a great power, and so the witnessing still continues. See further on this difficult point, p. 113.

[2] The reference to "the beast that cometh up out of the abyss," here first mentioned, is a brief preliminary notice of the terrible Power afterwards more fully described in chapters xiii., xvii., and which we shall prove to mean the Papacy.

of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." That is, all witnessing for the truth was publicly proclaimed and regarded as dead throughout the great world-city, the Sodom-Egypt of corrupt Christendom, as Lange well expresses it, represented by its metropolis the Papal Babylon of Rome.[1]

Then, too, the further description, in verse 9, was fulfilled: "From among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations [referring to ecclesiastical delegates from all quarters assembled at Rome] do men look upon their dead bodies [*i.e.* contemplate and talk over with satisfaction that extinction of protestant witnessing which was proclaimed at the Council], and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb [a vivid symbol of the perpetuation of insult heaped upon the memory of the extinguished witnesses for the truth]." The Papal rejoicings, which followed upon the supposed extinction of witnesses for the true Gospel, are vividly portrayed in verse 10.

Such was the *death* of public testimony to the pure Gospel in corrupt Christendom. But soon came the *resurrection*. Here, again, history supplies us with a remarkable identification of the fulfilment. We read: "And after three days and a half, the breath of life from God entered into them and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them, which beheld them . . . and they went up into heaven in the cloud" (verses 11,

[1] That "the great city" here spoken of cannot possibly mean Jerusalem, as some have supposed, has been conclusively shown by Wordsworth, Alford, *Speaker's Commentary*, and other high authorities. The *Speaker's Commentary* well remarks as follows: "The *great city* observe, not 'the holy city' as in verse 2. The phrase 'the great city' occurs eight times in the book. It is never used of Jerusalem. [The correct reading in chapter xxi. 10 is 'the holy city Jerusalem' (R.V.), not 'the great city,' as in A.V.]. 'The great' is always the epithet of Babylon."

The mistake of supposing Jerusalem to be meant has doubtless arisen, as Alford says, from the further description "where also [*i.e.* besides the Witnesses] their Lord was crucified." But the very manner in which this sentence is added to the previous one, where a spiritual or mystical meaning was expressly affirmed, would lead us to expect a deep mystical signification in these words also. And this meaning is twofold. First, Christ identifies Himself with His people. In their persecution He was "crucified afresh," as He said to Saul, "Why persecutest thou Me?" Secondly, it may have a local meaning, since Christ was crucified in a province of the Roman Empire, which, as we have explained above, was symbolised by "the great city."

12). In harmony with the previous period which we have noticed, these "days" must be taken as prophetic days, *i.e.* years. Now the crisis of the *proclamation of the death* of witnessing by the Lateran Council, which we have mentioned, was in May, 1514. It was *just three and a half years later*, in October, 1517, that witnessing *suddenly revived*, and the great Luther startled out of its complacency the still exultant world of Popedom by an act of open defiance, namely, the posting up of his celebrated *theses* at Wittenberg, which is universally regarded as the epoch of the Reformation. Thus, *after three symbolic days and a half* the breath of life entered into the witnesses for Gospel truth. We find a similar metaphor in Ezekiel xxxvii. 10, in the well-known vision of the dry bones, given to foretell the revival of the Hebrew nation: "the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet." The Pope himself wrote, in a Papal brief of 1593: "The heretics Huss and Jerome seem now to be *alive again* in the person of Luther."

But the protestant witnesses not only thus "stood upon their feet," but, in similar metaphorical language, they are described as *ascending into heaven.* They secured the favour of princes, and rose to power in the world. For, if the lying dead is a symbol of prostration and disgrace, it naturally follows that the *ascending* into heaven is a metaphor of *exaltation.*[1] A Romish historian, employing a different symbolism, thus describes this revival: "The fire, ill-smothered . . . was blown up again by Luther's bellows, and spread its flames far and wide, more than ever before."

It has been objected that if the explanation we have given be accepted, then, since the characteristic period, or measuring rod, of the prophesying, or preaching, of the witnesses in sackcloth is identical with that of the prospering of the Papacy, which, as we shall presently explain,[2] expired at the fall of the temporal power in 1870, it follows that the witnesses must have been

[1] Compare the figurative language used by our Lord with reference to the exaltation and subsequent degradation of Capernaum (Matt. xi. 23): "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt go down into Hades" (R.V.). So the exaltation of Babylon is spoken of as an *ascending into heaven* (Isa. xiv. 12).

[2] See p. 133

prophesying in sackcloth ever since their rise into power at the Reformation, and are in sackcloth still, and that this is inconsistent with the symbol of ascension into heaven, or exaltation. But this difficulty vanishes if we look into the meaning of the symbol. To prophesy in sackcloth is a figure borrowed from the prophets of old, who, clothed in the rough prophetic garb, *witnessed for God's truth, and declared judgment and woe as the consequence of idolatry and apostasy from the truth.* This, therefore, is the meaning of the figure, and the meaning remains the same, though the position and condition of those who thus witness may change. The ancient prophets prophesied in sackcloth, whether favoured by the great or held in contempt. So with the witnesses for the gospel truth. Their message is still a prophesying in sackcloth, even where they are held in honour, because it is a message that denounces *woe to an unbelieving world, and to all who give themselves up to soul-destroying error*, which is just the meaning of the symbol. And this meaning of the prophetic symbolic garb of the witnesses remains the same whether those who utter the message are many or few, and whether they lie in the dust or ascend into honour.

It should be mentioned here that another interpretation of the crisis foretold in this prophecy of the "two witnesses" has been adopted by Canon Garratt and others of the historical school. Influenced, no doubt, by the present lamentable spread of the spirit and teaching of Romanism in the English Church, they interpret the finishing of the testimony of the witnesses not of the *completion* or *culmination* of their testimony, as it has been explained above, which took place more than three centuries before the characteristic Papal period of 1,260 years ran out, but of an actual finishing and *extinction* to take place *after the end* of the 1,260 years, and therefore now imminent. They anticipate another period, besides that at the crisis of the Reformation, when the testimony of all evangelical Churches shall be superseded by the ecclesiastical powers, and then, after an interval, be again revived to new life and power by a second *Reformation.* We believe, however, the explanation advocated by Elliott, which we have given, to be preferable to this. Never was the true Gospel

of Christ more powerful in the world than now, witness the glorious work of the Church Missionary Society. The Evangelical section of the Established Church in England has no intention of being suppressed. And even if such suppression were attempted in the Church established, which God forbid, Evangelicals would still witness, though disestablished; and, together with faithful witnesses in other Churches of the land, would still preach the true Gospel of Christ.

In verse 13 we have a further symbolical description of the great crisis of the Reformation: "In that hour there was a great earthquake." Historians frequently refer to the Reformation under this very symbol. Thus Professor Goldwin Smith writes: "The Reformation was a tremendous earthquake. It shook down the fabric of mediæval religion, and, as a consequence of the disturbance in the religious sphere, filled the world with revolutions and wars." Moreover, as the results of that great shock to the Papal power were most conspicuously manifested in England, the symbolic prophecy goes on to say that "the tenth part of the city fell," England being one of the separate kingdoms into which the Roman Empire, the great Sodom-Egypt "city" of Christendom, became subdivided, as symbolised by the "ten toes" and "ten horns" in the prophetic visions of Daniel.[1]

The further detail, "and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons," must in all consistency be taken in a symbolical sense, like the earthquake itself. If the earthquake represents a shock to the Papal system, the seven thousand killed must denote the disastrous consequences to the Papacy from that shock. And as in an account of a literal earthquake a statement is frequently added relating the number of lives *lost*, so here, as a consequence of the proclamation of the Gospel at the Reformation which shook the Papal system, a figurative expression is added denoting the great number of those who, receiving the truth, fell away from Romanism and became *lost* to the cause of the Papacy, the term "killed" being thus used figuratively for

[1] This will be found explained later on. See p. 160. The "tenth part" need not be strictly limited to England. The number "ten" admits of some latitude, *e.g.*, Gen. xxxi. 7, Neh. iv. 12.

political extinction, like the dead in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones.[1]

The further statement that "the rest were affrighted" refers to the main body of the Roman Catholics, and to the consternation which they felt at these losses to their cause. Luther wrote at this crisis: "The Papists in Germany are *filled with fear*." The added detail, that they "gave glory to the God of heaven," refers to the conviction forced upon their consciences that the hand of God must have been in all this. The phrase, as Alford shows, signifies *compelled recognition of God's doings*. The same expression is used with reference to the Philistines when they were awestruck at the judgments inflicted upon them by God in connection with the ark, as recorded in 1 Samuel vi. 5.

The anticipatory announcement, in Revelation x. 5–7, concerning the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, and the description of the actual sounding of it, which forms the subject of the concluding portion of chapter xi., will be explained later on when we come to the consideration of the meaning of the three connected series of the Seals, the Trumpets and the Vials.[2]

At this point we think it will tend to make the subject clearer to our readers if we leave the order adopted in the paragraphs of the *Abstract*, which (as explained in the introductory observations to this Second Part) we have used as a basis for our remarks.

The various phrases gathered from different passages of the Revelation, and put together in the *Abstract* apart from their

[1] For a similar use of the same word compare the description of the fifth Trumpet, p. 325.

We should add that Elliott suggests a different and more definite interpretation of the symbolism of the destruction of the "seven thousand" by the earthquake. He takes the "thousands" here spoken of in the sense of a local or tribal division, as the term was used amongst the Hebrews; and in this sense he refers it to the conspicuous feature of the Reformation afforded by the conversion to Protestantism of the seven provinces of Holland, and the loss thereby incurred by the Papacy. Alford, however, points out some serious objections to this interpretation.

In a deeply mysterious and symbolic prophecy we must not be surprised at such differences of opinion with regard to some of the more obscure details. With humility and caution we must use our judgment, and select that interpretation which most commends itself to our understanding.

[2] See page 337.

context, lead to confusion. Whereas if we consider them in connection with their context, and in the order in which they come before us in St. John's record of his visions, we are more likely to see their true drift and meaning.

Before passing from the *Abstract*, we may, however, briefly refer to the fourth paragraph, the wording of which, if left unnoticed, might lead to some confusion.

We are told in this paragraph: "He is associated with Satan in persecution of the Church of Christ." Most assuredly this is true of the Pope, as representative of the Roman Catholic System, which has ever persecuted, if possible, to the death, the true and pure Church of Christ's faithful people. Such persecution is Satanic work, and those who engage in it are to that extent co-workers with Satan. Most assuredly, too, as the paragraph proceeds to state, "among those who have part in 'the first resurrection' are martyrs during the time of the Beast's power" (Rev. xx. 4). Whom, indeed, might we expect to see prominent amongst the saints of the first resurrection if not the noble army of martyrs whose blood has been shed for "the testimony of Jesus" during the power of the Papal Beast? And since Satan prompted those persecutions, it is of course true, as the paragraph says, that "Satan's persecutions continue during the same period."[1]

The next words of the paragraph we believe to contain much error and confusion. They mistakenly define this period of persecution and of the Beast's power as being "after the removal of the Man-Child, which is identical with the rapture of the first-fruits Rev. xiv. 1–5, xii. 13, 14, 17." Perhaps the best way of showing the error, and removing the confusion in the above passage, will be to proceed from this point with our examination of the Book of Revelation itself, in the course of which we shall explain the meaning of chapter xii., the Scripture principally referred to.

[1] It should be noted that in the passage cited above in the *Abstract* (Rev. xx. 4) the two groups of martyrs, namely, the victims of Pagan and Papal persecution, are both indicated. *Beheading* was a usual mode of putting to death in the Pagan times in which St. John lived, and an axe was the familiar Roman emblem of capital punishment. Tradition says that St. Paul was beheaded. This term therefore refers to *Pagan* persecution; while the words "*such as worshipped not the Beast*" no less clearly refer to the martyrs who have fallen under *Papal* persecution. See further on this, p. 435.

Our further exposition of chapter xiii. will, we trust, prove that the period of the persecution by the Beast does not mean some future time after the taking up of the saints of the first resurrection, but that it is the period of the persecuting power of the Papacy which has harassed the Church for more than twelve centuries.

We have already shown that Revelation x. and xi. contain a symbolic prophecy given to St. John in vision, concerning the preaching of the Gospel during this dispensation, with special reference to the epoch of the Reformation. As the visions of these two chapters are introduced in an episodical manner between the sixth and seventh Trumpet, so chapters xii. and xiii., together with other preliminary visions narrated in chapters xiv. and xv., are introduced in a similar way between the sounding of the seventh Trumpet at the end of chapter xi., and the pouring out of the Vials, which unfold the details of the seventh Trumpet period, and which are not described till chapter xvi.

In Revelation xii. and xiii. we have a symbolic prophecy in connection with the fortunes of the Church, the former chapter relating to Satan's malicious attempts to extinguish Christianity, from its beginning up to the time of the rise of the Papal power; whilst the latter foretells the action and character of that great power itself, and the havoc it was to work in the Church of Christ.

Let us now look a little more closely into the meaning of these chapters, and first into that of Revelation xii. The limits of the present work will only admit of a brief and condensed explanation of this mysterious passage of Scripture.

In the first section of the chapter (verses 1–6) the Woman, the Man-child, and the Dragon are three prominent symbols which require consideration.

The *Woman*, "arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," which St. John beheld as "a sign" in the "heaven" of the earthly landscape presented to him in vision, is very generally admitted to be a symbol of the *Church*. The meaning of the Woman may be defined as being the true Church of God's faithful people (not, of

course, confined to any one sect or establishment) regarded as a *visible* Church, with public ordinances, teachers, and institutions, which is at once the receptacle and holder forth of the true way of salvation revealed by God to man.

As to the meaning of the *Great Red Dragon*, "having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head seven diadems," we have previously shown that the fourth Beast of Daniel with its "ten horns" symbolised the world-empire of Rome, and that it is this fourth, or Roman Beast, which is presented in the visions of St. John, the other three Beasts, or world-empires, having passed away.[1] Moreover, we there remarked that the later revelation given to St. John contained, as might be expected, fuller information and other aspects and details of the fourth world-empire. Accordingly in this vision of Revelation xii. it is symbolised in a *dragon* form. Whilst the "ten horns" identify it with the fourth Beast of Daniel, *i.e.*, with the Roman Empire, the "dragon" form also connects it in a marked manner with Satan, Rev. xx. 2. The symbol of the Dragon, therefore, with the ten horns here indicates the *Pagan* period of the Roman Empire, the time when Satan persecuted the Church of Christ without disguise, and in an openly hostile form. Whereas in the subsequent *Papal* period of the Roman Empire his antichristian action is disguised under a professedly Christian rule, and accordingly the dragon form no longer appears, but the empire rule of Rome during that period is represented to St. John in vision by a Beast of a wonderfully complex character, as we shall presently show in our explanation of the next chapter, Revelation xiii.

The *Man-child* doubtless has a preliminary reference to Christ, whom Satan sought to destroy in infancy through Herod, a king appointed under the Pagan Roman Empire, and to His deliverance from Satan's schemes, and final ascension into heaven. Regarded in this sense, as Alford says, "*the true visible Church*, in its divinely prescribed form as existing at Jerusalem, was the mother of our Lord according to the flesh."[2] But there is

[1] See p. 100. Elliott mentions that a red dragon was used as a Roman ensign.

[2] The metaphor of "mother" as applied to the Church occurs both in the Old and New Testament. Cf. Isaiah liv. 1, and Galatians iv. 26, 27.

a further meaning of the *Man-child*. The true visible Church of the Old Testament passed into that of the New, and Christ was the first-born and representative of many brethren. Accordingly the further reference of the symbol of the Man-child in this passage is to those true children of the true visible Church who are one with Christ, who share His sufferings, and who will hereafter share His glory. These faithful ones are referred to in the last verse of the chapter as "the rest of her seed . . . which *hold the testimony of Jesus*." We find that the very same description which is given of Christ in Psalm ii. 9, and which is here spoken of the Man-child, is also said of faithful Christians in Revelation ii. 27, namely, that they are to "rule the nations with a rod of iron," referring to their share in the strong and righteous millennial government of Christ hereafter to be set up on earth. During this dispensation they are being "caught up unto God" one by one as they leave this world, carried by angels into heavenly rest out of the reach of Satan's malice. Hereafter when they have all been gathered, including the rapture of those living on earth when Christ comes for them, they will at last be manifested in glory with Him.

The next section of the chapter we are considering (Rev. xii. 7–12) is interposed parenthetically as giving an explanation of Satan's ever-increasing hostility, and refers to certain stages in his downfall. The nature of the conflict between the holy angels and Satan with his evil hosts is a mystery concerning which we only catch occasional glimpses in Scripture. The "war in heaven" with which this section opens seems to relate in the first place to that stage of Satan's downfall which took place at the beginning of the present dispensation, after his attempts to destroy the Man-child Christ had failed, and when the great work of Redemption had been accomplished by which Satan was cast down from the position of accuser of God's people in heaven which he seems to have held in Old Testament times.[1] Another stage of his downfall that seems to be referred to, and a faint foreshadowing of his final ruin, was the crisis when Paganism as the professed religion of the Roman world-empire was over-

[1] Compare Job i. ii.; Zech. iii. 1; Luke x. 18; John xii. 31.

thrown. The writers of that time spoke of this great crisis under the same imagery, as a conflict between the spiritual hosts of light and darkness. Other stages of Satan's downfall are still future. Although, as we have said, it would seem that he was cast down at the beginning of this dispensation out of the *higher* heavens, yet throughout the present age, as we may gather from Ephesians ii. 2 and vi. 12, he, together with his subordinate hosts of evil spirits, still occupies "the heavenlies," a peculiar expression in this epistle, with different shades of meaning, but which in the above passages refers to the atmospheric heavens, or upper regions of our earth. He is to be cast down further when Christ comes again; for we are told, in Revelation xx. 1–3, that during His Millennial reign Satan is to be confined in the "abyss"; and the last stage will be at the end of Christ's reign, when Satan's final doom is to be cast into "the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 10). The present vision shows how, at each stage of his downfall, the hostility of Satan against the human race increases, because he is thereby reminded that his career of mischief is running out, and that "he hath but a short time" (verse 12). It shows, too, that each stage of his downfall is a matter of rejoicing to the heavenly intelligences.

The symbolism of the latter part of the chapter (Rev. xii. 13–16) is difficult. The *flight of the Woman into the wilderness* indicates *a change of condition* with regard to the position of the true visible Church of Christ in the world. A similar use of the metaphor is found in Ezekiel when God says of the house of Israel, "I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples,"[1] meaning their spiritual wilderness period of trial whilst exiled amongst the nations. The "wilderness" in the present vision signifies the desolate state amidst adverse circumstances to which the true visible Church would be reduced during the long and disastrous career of the Papacy. This period, the Papal period of 1,260 years, is mystically expressed in this chapter as "a thousand, two hundred and threescore days" (verse 6), and as "a time and times, and half a time" (verse 14), and in the next chapter (verse 5) as "forty and two months." It has been previously mentioned in chapter xi. 3 as "a thousand two hundred

[1] Ezek. xx. 35.

and threescore days" in connection with the prophesying of the "two witnesses."[1]

A difficulty has been raised by Alford and others with regard to this period of wilderness desolation, because the Reformation occurring in the latter part of it seems scarcely compatible with the idea of the true visible Church in a wilderness state. But the difficulty is more apparent than real. The Reformation was indeed a great advance out of the wilderness state. But it was not complete emergence. It was a token and pledge of ultimate victory, just as the French Revolution was a preliminary token of Papal downfall. The Reformation was only partial. Romish and other errors soon corrupted the truth and gained ascendancy. The visible Church of the pure Gospel cannot yet be said to have emerged from wilderness obscurity in the world. That will not be till the great Head of the Church comes to vindicate and manifest His own truth. Moreover, since the characteristic period of Papal prospering is that mystically expressed period which we have already mentioned, it is only natural that the same period should be assigned in symbolic prophecy to the wilderness state of the Woman, or visible Church of truth, which is opposed to it.[2]

"*The two wings of the great eagle*" (verse 14) is a description which is taken by some to symbolise God's support and care for His faithful Church during her flight into the wilderness, as when

[1] We shall give a fuller explanation of this Papal period presently in our examination of the description of the Papal Power in chapter xiii.

[2] Alford has some good remarks upon the Woman in the wilderness which it may be well to add here. After discussing the difficulties of the passage, he says in conclusion: "I own that I have been led to think whether after all the Woman may be said to represent, not the *invisible* Church of God's true people, which under all conditions of the world must be known only to Him, but the *true visible Church*; that Church which in its divinely prescribed form as existing at Jerusalem was the mother of our Lord according to the flesh, and which continued as established by our Lord and His apostles, in unbroken unity during the first centuries, but which as time went on was broken up by evil men and evil doctrines, and has remained unseen, unrealised, her unity an article of faith, not of sight, but still multiplying her seed, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, in various sects and distant countries, waiting the day for her comely order and oneness again to be manifested—the day when she shall 'come up out of the wilderness, leaning on her beloved.'" (New Testament for English Readers *ad loc.*).

it is said of Israel of old, "I bare you on eagles' wings." By others it is held to refer to the support rendered by Christian emperors during that time, the eagle being a Roman emblem. It must be remembered that the *flight* spoken of represents a gradual transition, lasting some three centuries, from the fall of Paganism to the rise of Romanism. As the visible Church of error asserted herself, the visible Church of truth had to retire. She became less and less prominent to the eye of man. Her outward manifestation in congregations, and ecclesiastical buildings, and open preaching of the Gospel, became more and more suppressed, and the dearth of ordinary outward means of grace in the hands of her ministers became more and more felt. And so, when at length the Harlot of the Romish Church began openly to flaunt herself enthroned upon the Empire in the city of Rome, the Woman, or true visible Church, had become hidden in the obscurity and privation of the wilderness condition, not, however, to starve and perish there, but to be preserved and "nourished" by the bread of life all through the period of Papal prospering, "for a time and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (verse 14).

The *flood* cast out by the Dragon, or Serpent, in the concluding portion of this chapter (verses 15, 16), in order to sweep the woman away, symbolised the floods of Gothic invasions instigated by Satan, by means of which, before the rise of the Papal Power, he sought to sweep the very name of Christianity from off the Roman world. But these rough heathen invaders were themselves absorbed into a profession of Christianity, and thus, as the vision relates, "the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and [as a chasm absorbs a stream] swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (verse 16, R.V.).

Canon Garratt, and some others of the Historical school, think that the flood symbolises the flood of Arianism and other heresies, by which, during the same period, Satan endeavoured to overwhelm the Church.

In the more obscure portions of symbolic prophecy, and when the emblems employed have more than one signification in other parts of Scripture, it is only what might be expected, that there should be some difference of interpretation, especially when

either meaning can be shown to have an application to the case. But the former explanation seems more fully and obviously to answer to the symbolism. As a further confirmation of this view we may add the following remark of Bishop Lightfoot, which remarkably illustrates the figurative description of the Roman earth swallowing up the flood of heathen invaders, the more so as the Bishop is writing, not with reference to this prophecy, but as a matter of history: "The Goths and the Vandals who poured down upon the Roman Empire were evangelised so silently, or so rapidly, that only a fact here and there relating to their conversion has been preserved." [1]

Thus we may trace the course of Satan's persecuting malice as foreshadowed in this chapter xii. as follows: first, pagan persecution; then the attempt to sweep away the very name and existence of the Christian Church during the anarchy and confusion occasioned by barbarian invasions; and lastly, when these had failed, the more insidious and fatal design of persecuting God's faithful people who "hold the testimony of Jesus" by means of a terrible Power professing the name of Christianity. Satan enters upon this last scheme at the close of this chapter, and in chapter xiii. there follows a detailed description of this Power under the symbolic title of "the Beast." [2]

We would ask the reader whether this brief explanation from the Historical point of view is not a more sober and intelligent interpretation of this mysterious chapter than the inconsistency

[1] *Historical Essays*, p. 83. On the symbolism of *earth* and *sea* Canon Garratt here well remarks: "In this prophecy we have mention made of the earth and of the sea, the *sea* being, as elsewhere explained (Rev. xvii. 15), the symbol of nations in a state of commotion, and the *earth* the symbol of the settled Roman Empire, *geographically and politically*." We may also add *ecclesiastically*, as we shall show later on, p. 148.

[2] It should be noted that by comparing verse 6 with verse 14 of chapter xii., we see that we must distinguish between the flying of the Woman into the wilderness and her residence there. All that is said in this chapter about the Woman, between verse 6 and verse 16, refers to the period of her *flight*, as described above. The notice of the duration of her wilderness condition in verse 6 refers to the Papal period as described in chapter xiii. Such preliminary notices of a subject to be afterwards more fully revealed form a constantly recurring feature in the Apocalypse. We shall see further instances in the course of our inquiry. The Papal Beast was thus mentioned in a brief anticipatory manner in chapter xi. verse 7, as we have previously explained.

combined with improbability which results from the Futurist view. Thus, for example, a well-known expositor of the Revelation belonging to the latter school, whilst he interprets the Woman *symbolically* as the Church, the Man-child as raptured saints, the two wings of the eagle as indicating God's support, and the river sent forth after the Woman as an attacking army, nevertheless throws the fulfilment of the prophecy into the future, and then, following their *literal* system of interpretation, asserts that the mysterious period of "a time, times, and half a time," or 1,260 days, must be interpreted literally, as the last three and a half years of this dispensation during which period an individual Antichrist will persecute the Church, that the "wilderness" means a literal desert into which all Christians are to be driven, and which he suggests will probably be the wilderness of Sinai, that the attacking army will follow thither after them, and that then the earth will literally open her mouth, and that in a huge chasm formed by a sudden earthquake the whole of the attacking army will be swallowed up.[1]

It should be noted that our Futurist brethren for the most part do not attempt, as the above author does, to grapple with the difficulties in which their system of literalism involves them when applied to the Book of Revelation in detail. They seem to prefer to dwell upon the career of the supernatural Antichristian Prince whose coming they are looking for, which forms a topic that more readily lends itself to the imagination and to their literal system of interpretation. But surely if we would rightly understand the "dark sayings" of this mysterious book, we must have a key that will apply to the whole of it, and bring all the parts into harmony with itself, and with the other prophetical portions of Scripture; and this key we find in the Historical system. We have need, too, rather to curb our imagination than to give rein to it, and to follow the hint, twice furnished in the Revelation, that these are *symbolical* prophecies, requiring both careful observation and sober judgment in order to understand their deep meaning: "Here is the mind which hath wisdom," "Here is wisdom."[2]

[1] Seiss on the Revelation. Lectures xxviii., xxx.

[2] Rev. xvii. 9; xiii. 18. Compare the words of our Lord, Matthew xxiv. 15.

We will now enter upon a brief explanation of the next chapter (Rev. xiii.), which contains, as we have said, a more detailed revelation of the career and character of the Beast; and in doing so we shall show that the many references in the *Abstract* to this chapter, so far from proving that the Antichrist of prophecy must be some future individual, only show how exactly the whole chapter is fulfilled by the Papal system. We shall also notice briefly passages of Revelation xvii., which is a further and fuller prophecy in connection with the same subject.

At the close of Revelation xii. we saw that Satan, having failed in his open attacks against the Woman, resolved upon another plan. We read, verse 17, that he "went away to make war with the rest of her seed which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus: and he stood upon the sand of the sea" (R.V.). Gazing upon the troubled "sea" of nations, he meditated how next to assail the Woman. The form of attack is contained in the vision of chapter xiii. He no longer works openly, but insidiously, under the guise of Christianity. St. John thus describes his vision: "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea,[1] having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority" (Rev. xiii. 1, 2).

We have already stated that the Beast of the Revelation refers to the Roman Empire which was symbolised by the fourth Beast of Daniel vii.[2] The three previous Beasts or world-empires, namely, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, had passed away, and St. John was living under the fourth or *Roman* world-empire. Moreover, the Beast that is here described is represented as being under the supremacy of its eighth or last

[1] *i.e.* The sea of anarchy and confusion of peoples. It should be noted that since the plan of the Beast or Antichrist originated with Satan, this Power is spoken of in Revelation xi. 7, and xvii. 8, as coming up from the "abyss," the home of Satan. See page 186.

[2] See page 100. The ten *horns* identify it. The *heads* are a further revelation given to St. John, in order to fix more definitely the time of the rise of the Papacy, as we shall see.

head; that is to say, it is the Roman world-empire *in its last form*, as we shall show fully later on, when we come to the explanation of the complex symbolism of the "horns" and "heads." We propose to show first of all that the *position*, *character*, and *career* of this Beast, as portrayed in the symbolic vision given to St. John, are an exact description of the position, character, and career of the Papacy; and then, in our explanation of the symbolism of the "horns" and the "heads" we hope to prove that the *time* at which this terrible antichristian Power was to appear on the scene of the world was the very time when the Papacy rose into prominence and power. If, therefore, as to position, character, career, and especially as to the time when it was to appear in the world, the Papacy can be shown to correspond to the Power depicted in this prophecy, it becomes a matter of demonstration that the Papacy is the evil Power that was here foretold, or, in other words, the Antichrist of prophecy.

First as to *position*. Again and again in this description the position that the Beast would attain to in the world is stated to be one of *supreme dominion*, commanding the homage of mankind. Moreover, it is a position assigned to him by Satan, for we have explained how Satan, having failed in his open attacks, devised a more subtle scheme. In this he worked behind the scenes, and energised a system, headed up in a person, which, professing Christ, nevertheless would act against Christ and His true followers. The position of the Beast is thus described in this chapter: "and the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority" (verse 2, R.V.); "and the whole earth wondered after the beast" (verse 3); "and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast: and who is able to war with him?" (verse 4); "and there was given unto him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation" (verse 7).

In order to understand this description, it is necessary to bear in mind several important points: (1) that it is a picture of the Papacy in its *prime*, not in its first emergence, nor yet in its injured or decaying condition; though the aim and spirit of the Papacy, according to its own boast, has always been

the same: (2) that the earth in St. John's vision was the Roman earth, the earth of the Roman Empire: (3) that the description is given in those terms of strong metaphor and hyperbole which are an essential feature of the language of the East, and especially of the language of prophecy; and that not to recognise this is simply to misunderstand the Bible, which is an Eastern book: (4) that the Papacy is a two-fold Power *spiritual* and *temporal*. Thus Bishop Wordsworth says: "The Roman Pontiff is *twice* crowned —once with the Mitre, his symbol of universal *Bishopric*, and once with the Tiara, in token of universal *Imperial* supremacy" (*Union with Rome*, p. 48).

Bearing these points in mind, let us see how completely the description of *supreme dominion* is fulfilled in the Papacy. The Papal orator in the Lutheran Council, blasphemously applying to the Pope the language that belongs to Christ alone, declared that in the submission of all nations to Leo the prophecy was fulfilled, "all kings shall fall down and worship him: all nations shall serve and obey him." Two Pontifical writers of the middle ages speak thus of the Papal dominion: "All nations from East and from West venerate the Pope," "The princes of the world now adore and worship a perpetual Dictator, the successor, not of Cæsar, but of the fisherman Peter, that is, the Supreme Pontiff." *King of Kings* was one of the Papal titles. The usual formula of investiture with the Papal tiara was, "Receive this triple crown, and know that thou art the father of princes, and *the King and ruler of the world*." The Papacy still claims its right to universal dominion, and is the only power that does so. In other words, it is the only form of the Roman world-empire now in existence; and since, according to Daniel, the fourth or Roman world-empire lasts right up to the coming of Christ, the Papacy must be that form which now represents it. Cardinal Manning in a sermon, speaking of Papal dominion, made the Pope to say, "I am liberated from all civil subjection; my Lord made me subject of no one on earth, king or otherwise; in His right *I am Sovereign*." Thus the language of Rome identifies itself with the Antichrist, and proclaims the fulfilment in the Papacy of this foretold characteristic of supremacy.[1]

[1] See Elliott, *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iii. pp. 131, 176; Guinness, *Approaching*

When objectors, therefore, point to the words, "the whole earth wondered after the beast," and ask, When could this have been said of the Papacy? when did Hottentots and Hindoos bow before the Pope? the answer is simple. The expression is used to denote *a marvellous and widespread influence*, just in the same way as when the Pharisees said of the multitudes who followed Christ, "Lo, the world is gone after Him," or like as St. Paul told the Roman converts that their faith was "proclaimed throughout the whole world." Moreover, as we have said, the earth which was represented to St. John in vision was the Roman earth of the Western Empire, that territory which was to be subdivided into separate kingdoms (symbolised, as we have seen, by the ten horns of the Beast), over which the Harlot of chapter xvii., admittedly the apostate Church of Rome, is described as exercising her pernicious fascination. The further description of verse 8, therefore, "And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life"—a description which is repeated in very similar terms in chapter xvii. 8—must not be taken by itself, but must be interpreted in accordance with the whole chain of evidence regarding the meaning of the symbolic Beast which St. John saw. Regarded thus, and bearing in mind the points already mentioned, we can see that this symbolic vision foretold a Power which should attain a marvellous political ascendancy in the world, and also would by its false claims and teachings exercise a fatal spell over the souls of men; but that, in spite of it, all through its dark career, there would be those who, like the seven thousand in Elijah's time, would refuse to bow the knee to the Papal Baal, and who, "holding the testimony of Jesus," and looking to Him alone, not to Pope or priest, for pardon and peace, would have their names inscribed in the Book of Life.

The author of *The Coming Prince* says that this is to make out that "the verse does not mean exactly what it says," and further attempts to ridicule the Historical explanation of the passage by adding that, "according to these interpreters such a statement must be taken *cum grano salis*." We reply that the "grain of

End of the Age, p. 192; Wordsworth, *Is the Papacy Predicted by St. Paul?* p. 23.

salt" is just that right understanding of how and when to recognise the figurative and hyperbolical element, which, perhaps we might be pardoned for saying, our Futurist brethren seem to lack. We have shown that this element pervades the Eastern language of the Bible; and it might be especially looked for in the description of a symbolical and prophetic vision like the present. Let any one attempt to read the corresponding description in Revelation xvii. on the literal principle of each verse meaning "exactly what it says," and he will see in what absurdities he becomes involved; and the same is true of this chapter, as we shall further show.

Mr. Neil, who spent a large portion of his life as a missionary in the East, has done good service towards elucidating the Bible, by pointing out the frequent use of *hyperbole*. Thus in *Pictorial Palestine* (p. 89) he says: "The words 'all' and 'none' are constantly used in the East for 'a great many' or 'very few.' And this is just the same in the Bible." He gives abundant examples of this.

Instead, therefore, of being any objection, the detail that "all the world" wondered after the Beast constitutes a remarkable identification of the Beast with the Papacy. The Papal Power is the only Power to which such a description could be applied. That it has been so described we have already proved. That it is still so described the following example will show. Signor Crispi, in his speech at the unveiling of the statue of Garibaldi, September 20, 1895, is reported in the daily papers as having spoken of the Papacy as follows. After alluding to the loss of the Temporal Power, he thus refers to the spiritual world-empire of the Pope: "No earthly prince is in a similar position or on the same level. His position is unique. He has no territory to govern; indeed, any extent of territory would be inadequate for his position; and yet *all the world* is subject to his spiritual empire."

It should be noted that inasmuch as the Papal Beast is Satan's masterpiece, as it has well been said, and is energised by him in order to deceive the nations, the homage that would be rendered to it is, in one passage, namely verse 4, spoken of as being also rendered to Satan himself: "And they worshipped the Dragon

because he gave his authority to the Beast; and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? and who is able to war with him?" This, also, is a common figure of speech in the East and in the Bible; and, as an instance of its use amongst ourselves, we may mention a passage in one of the late Bishop Magee's sermons, where, speaking of the acceptance of a false but plausible religious system instead of a true one, he designates such an action in words that seem almost like a commentary on this portion of St. John's prophetic vision, as *a worshipping of Satan, and doing homage to the father of all falsehood by yielding up the supremacy of truth.*[1]

So much for the *position* of the Beast; next as to his *character*. The two prominent points, both here and in Daniel's vision of the Little Horn on the fourth Beast, are *cruel persecution* of God's faithful ones and *blasphemous utterances*.

The identity of Papal *persecution* with the prophecy is obvious. The awful total of something like fifty millions of martyrs brand the Papacy as the greatest of persecuting Powers and the complete fulfilment of this prophetic vision.

[1] *Gospel of the Age*, p. 82. This putting of *the Principal for his Agent* is one of the many forms of *metonymy*, a familar figure of speech in the East, and in the Bible. See *Strange Figures*, by Mr. Neil, p. 37. We may add that the Greek word here for "worship" means literally to *do homage*, or *make obeisance* (see Grimm's Lexicon). It is used of reverence paid to men and demons, as well as to God. It exactly accords with the homage rendered to the Pope by pilgrims from all parts of the world when they kiss his toe.

As a further illustration of the idea of Satan and those he energises being spoken of in the same manner, we may cite the striking fact that Cardinal Newman, before he openly joined the Church of Rome, not only wrote of that Church as "bound by a perpetual bond and covenant to the cause of Antichrist," but added, "*we must treat her as if she were that evil one which governs her.*" (See Newman's Letter of Withdrawal in the *Oxford Conservative Journal*, 1843, where he quotes his former statements.)

Some Futurist writers and speakers of the present day are making much of a gross form of devil worship carried on by some degraded individuals in France, as if it were the beginning of the fulfilment of this prophetic vision. But it is really nothing of the kind, as the cases are very different. These devil-worshippers, like those in heathen lands, worship Satan in his own essence as their deity, whereas in St. John's prophetic vision the prime object of homage is evidently the Beast, and the homage to the Dragon is only introduced in a subordinate way, and with the meaning we have given above.

The identification of the *blasphemous utterances* with those of the Papacy can be proved with equal clearness. We read (verse 6): "And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name." In order to understand this feature of St. John's prophetic vision, it is necessary to bear in mind (1st) that God's *name* signifies His attributes and prerogatives; and (2nd) that *blasphemy* is a special term used in the New Testament to denote the invasion of God's prerogatives. Thus when Christ claimed to forgive sins, the Scribes, thinking Him a mere man, said, "This man blasphemeth." Is not this just what the Pope claims to do? and seeing that he *is* a mere man, does he not commit blasphemy?[1]

It was customary for those at the head of heathen empires to receive adulation in terms that could only be properly applied to God, and accordingly the seven *previous* heads, or headships, of this Roman Beast or world-empire are, in verse 1, said to have upon them "names of blasphemy." But the blasphemous claims of this *eighth* head were to transcend them all; so that, in Revelation xvii. 3, it is described as "*full* of names of blasphemy." When Alexander VI. made his entrance as Supreme Pontiff into the Church of St. Peter at Rome, on one of the triumphal arches there was this inscription: "Rome was great under Cæsar, but now she is greatest. Alexander VI. reigns. Cæsar was a man, Alexander is a god."[2] Similar examples of this Papal "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (verse 5) abound in Romish writings and historical records. The following instances are cited by the late Sir A. Blackwood in one of his interesting papers contributed to a religious periodical[3]: "In the bull *Unam Sanctam* it is declared . . . 'the Roman Pontiff judges all men, but is judged by no one. . . . We declare, assert, define, and pronounce, *to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is to every human creature altogether necessary for salvation* . . . that which was spoken of Christ, 'thou hast subdued all things under his feet,' may well seem verified in me. . . .

[1] See Matthew ix. 3. Compare xxvi. 65.

[2] *Curio Storia di Milano*, part vii. p. 888, cited by Mr. C. H. Collette, also Geikie, *The English Reformation*, p. 117.

[3] See the *Christian* for October 26th, 1893.

I have the authority of the King of all Kings. I am all in all and above all, so that God Himself and I, the Vicar of God, have but one Consistory, and I am able to do almost all that God can do. What, therefore, can you make me but God?'"

What more striking fulfilment could there be of the "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies"? The climax of these, and the top-stone of the edifice of Papal pride, was the proclamation of *infallibility* in 1870. Then the bolt from heaven fell, and the Temporal Power was overthrown. But this was only the prelude and token of the final overthrow of the whole system which will take place when Christ comes.[1]

The further definition in verse 6 of the Beast's blasphemous characteristics, namely, that he would blaspheme God's "tabernacle, even them that dwell in heaven," though somewhat obscurely expressed, includes within its scope, as shown by Lange, Fausset, etc., the saints on earth, and also the saints and angels of heaven. We may take it, therefore, as foreshadowing that the impious pride of the Pope's official utterances would not only invade the prerogatives of God, but would be directed against His faithful servants on earth, His Church in whom He dwells as His "tabernacle," and would also reach to those dwelling in heaven. As an example of such utterances against those on earth, let us take the Pope's blasphemous anathematisation of the saints of God, who, faithful to "the testimony of Jesus," refuse to be deluded by the sacerdotal claims of Rome, and who are therefore denounced as heretics: "May God Almighty and all His saints curse them with the curse with which the devil and his angels are cursed. Let them be destroyed out of the land of the living. . . . Let the devil

[1] The same spirit of blasphemous pride still exists. The author has been informed by a resident in Rome that the present Pope Leo XIII. has placed a bust of himself in bronze in the Vatican, on which there is the following inscription, "Leo [*i.e.* Lion] of the Tribe of Judah." This glaring assumption of a title that is peculiarly Christ's own is but one of the many instances by which the Papacy has identified itself with the description given of it in the Revelation, as wearing "names of blasphemy." My informant has seen the plaster cast of the bust with the above inscription upon it. The same title had been assumed by a previous Pope Leo.

and his angels be their companions for ever."[1] As an instance of blasphemous pride with respect to heaven and its holy inhabitants, we may mention further the Pope's claim by canonising edicts to elevate whom he pleases of the dead into saints of angelic rank and privilege, thenceforth to form part of heaven's own hierarchy, and to be made objects of men's adoration and worship. Thus in the bull *Unam Sanctam*, already quoted, he says: "I am greater than the angels, and have power to bind and loose in heaven, and to give heaven to them that fight in my wars."

It is mentioned in the third paragraph of the *Abstract* that with this characteristic of blasphemy there is associated, in Revelation xvii. 3, the *scarlet colour* of the Beast. This feature only serves to confirm the identification with the Papacy in the most remarkable way. It is officially declared by Rome herself that "the colour *scarlet* especially belongs to the Pope."[2] It is the official colour of the Papacy, conspicuous in its robes of state. It is the court dress, so to speak. As Alford observes, it is the colour of "the Cardinals, at the same time the guiding council of the Church and princes of the State." Visitors to Rome describe the Pope's grand displays, such as accompanied, for instance, the proclamation of Papal infallibility, as a perfect *blaze of scarlet.*

Equally clear and striking is the evidence afforded by the description of the *career* of the Beast, which is the next point to be examined.

The seventh paragraph of the *Abstract* says: "His time of great power is limited to the last three years and a half before the kingdom of Christ is set up" (Rev. xi. 3; xii. 6, 14; xiii. 5). The inference of course is that the Beast must be some single individual in the future. Now this argument is entirely based

[1] Taken from the curse, published in the Romish Pontifical, to be pronounced on heretics by Romish priests. The subject of the Pope's blasphemies will come before us again in our third chapter of this part, where we show that the Beast, or Antichrist, is not an open infidel, but an invader of God's prerogatives under a Christian disguise. (See p. 230.)

[2] *Ceremoniale Rom.* iii. sect. 5, c. 5. Cited by Bishop Wordsworth in *Union with Rome*, p. 46.

upon what we believe may be easily shown to be a false assumption arising out of a misunderstanding of Scripture, namely, the assumption that the terms in which the duration of Antichrist's career was foreshadowed in prophecy are to be *literally* understood. On the contrary, the Historical interpretation proves that the duration of the career of this evil Power was foretold *not in literal, but in figurative language.* The dreary length of 1,260 years which was to constitute the characteristic period, or time of prospering, of the Papal Antichrist, was veiled under a *mysteriously varied formula of time*, the true meaning of which was only gradually to be revealed as centuries rolled on, till at length it should become clearly recognisable. The duration of the career of the Antichrist of prophecy is referred to in several passages both in Daniel and the Revelation, and *not once* is it described in the terms used in the *Abstract*, namely, as "three years and a half," which would be the ordinary way of speaking of it, if that literal period were intended to be understood. We would earnestly commend this remarkable fact to the consideration and judgment of all unbiassed students of prophecy.

A prominent modern advocate of the Futurist system, when pressed with this point by the present author in a discussion conducted in the columns of the *Rock* newspaper, attempted the following reply: "Futurists take a diverse and far more probable view of this fact. Noticing the wonderful anticipations of error which form one of the strongest proofs that the Bible is the Word of God, they readily perceive that He has defined precisely the same time in three different ways in order to show that He meant that time literally and exactly, and so to confound those who should afterwards essay to change His Divine revelation." (*The Rock*, February 14, 1896.) The latter allusion is presumably to the Historical school.

We think that our readers will readily perceive how completely this answer misses the point which it was intended to meet. They will note that God has *designedly omitted to use* in every case the very expression that might be expected to be used, namely, "three years and a half," if that literal time had been intended, and so has obviously indicated a *mystical* meaning.

To suppose that the obscure formula of "a time, times, and a half," which is one of the expressions that God *has* used, is employed in order to "define precisely," and to prove that the period is to be "literally" understood, is surely an idea that carries absurdity on the very face of it.[1]

This mystical period of the career of Antichrist is spoken of in three ways in the symbolical prophecies of Daniel and John. Sometimes it is described as "1,260 days." In other passages it is said to be forty-two months. In others, again, it is alluded to under the designedly mysterious formula, as already mentioned, of "a time, and times, and half a time," which is admitted to mean "one year, and two years, and half a year," or three and a half years. A comparison of these passages shows that they all refer to a period of the same duration; from which it is clear that in these symbolic chronological prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation the *month* is regarded as containing thirty days, and the *year* twelve of such months, or 360 days, so that the three and a half years, and the forty-two months, which are spoken of, are both equivalent to 1,260 days.[2]

Now the Historical interpretation of the periods thus mystically expressed is that a *day* stands for a *year*, and so the 1,260 days mean 1,260 *years*. We hold that this figurative description of the period was employed under Divine guidance by Daniel and John in order to veil the length of this dispensation, and of the baleful career of the Antichrist. It is, in fact, the natural corollary of that figurative use of *individual* language with regard to the Beast, which was employed for the same purpose, as we have

[1] The reader may compare what has already been said, pages 6, 101.

[2] See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Chronology," where it is shown that a year of this duration, namely, 360 days, was in use amongst some ancient nations. It is called the soli-lunar or *calendar* year as distinguished from the *lunar* year of 354 days, and the *solar* or ordinary year of 365 days. From its use in the Apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and John this *calendar* year of 360 days is sometimes spoken of as the symbolic or prophetic year; but the latter appellation is not strictly correct, since both *lunar* and *solar* years are also employed in chronological prophecies. (For a fuller explanation on this point see *Approaching End of the Age*, pp. 374, 380.)

We may add that the Hebrew sacred periods were calculated by lunar measurement.

previously shown. Just as a dynasty is described in miniature, so to speak, under the figure of an individual, so, in exact harmony and proportion the career of that dynasty is also described in miniature terms.[1]

Professor Birks has dwelt with emphasis on the point already mentioned, namely, that the very fact of this period, unlike any other period in Scripture or history, being *mysteriously described in three different ways*, at once draws attention to a *figurative or symbolic* meaning, and, occurring, as it does, in prophecies full of symbol, should have prevented Futurist expositors from falling into the error of regarding it as an ordinary literal statement of time, referring to the career of some future individual.

This point is so important, and so decisive against the Futurist view, that it may be well to quote the passage in full from Professor Birks' valuable work, *Elements of Prophecy*, more especially as that work is now out of print. He says: "*The different terms used to denote the same period* are a further proof that it cannot denote three natural years and a half. The same interval occurs seven times over. Twice it is mentioned as 'a time, times, and a dividing of a time'; once as 'a time, times, and a half'; twice as 'forty and two months'; and twice as 'twelve hundred and sixty days.'[2] A comparison of these passages will show that they all relate to the same period. Yet the expression is varied in this remarkable manner, and in all these variations is never once expressed by the natural and literal phrase. How can we explain this remarkable feature, but by supposing it to indicate a mysterious and hidden sense? The Holy Spirit seems in a manner to exhaust all the phrases by which the interval could be expressed, *excluding always that one form*, which would be used of course in ordinary writing, and is used invariably in Scripture on other occasions, to denote the literal period. This variation is most significant, if we accept the *year-day* system, but quite inexplicable on the other view."[3]

But it may be asked, Is there any authority to be found elsewhere in Scripture for the supposition that a "day" may be used

[1] See p. 101 for an explanation of individual language.

[2] Daniel vii. 25–27; xii. 7; Revelation xi. 1–3; xii. 5, 6, 13, 14, xiii. 5.

[3] *Elements of Prophecy*, p. 352.

in prophecy, under certain circumstances, for symbolising a "year"? The answer is clear. In the well-known passage describing the sentence on Israel after the searching of the land by the spies we read: "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day for a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty *years*."[1] Here it is obvious that a "day" is prophetically used to foreshadow a "year." Opponents argue that days here mean literal days. True, but it is equally clear that these literal days were *employed to foretell years* in the future. Just so in the prophecies we are considering. Again, in another passage we read how the prophet Ezekiel was bidden: "Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. . . . I have appointed thee *each day for a year*."[2] On this Dr. Guinness makes the following excellent comment: "Ezekiel here, like the spies before, was a type or representative of the nation; his recumbent position a type of their degradation and debasement by national sin, and the period during which he was to maintain that position, divinely fixed beforehand, represented the period to be completed prior to the end of the judgment which was to fall on that nation. And as Ezekiel was a *small* emblem of a *large* nation, so the days were a *brief* emblem of a *long* period, 'I have appointed thee a day for a year.' In each of these periods *a day*, in the enacted prophetic type, represented *a year* in the subsequent history." Dr. Guinness well emphasises the fact that if a small scale of portraiture—a beast for an empire, a horn for a kingdom, etc.—is used in these symbolic prophecies, it is only in strict consistency and proportion that a miniature scale of time should also be employed.[3]

But a proof still more to the point, if possible, is that of the celebrated prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Daniel which has been fully explained in the earlier portion of the present volume. Here Futurists admit that the Seventy Weeks prophetically repre-

[1] Numbers xiv. 34. [2] Ezekiel iv. 4–6.

[3] *Approaching End of the Age*, pp. 300–309. For a fuller explanation and wider application of the *year-day* principle of interpretation, the reader is referred to that portion of Dr. Guinness's interesting volume.

sent 490 years. This evidently accords with the principle of a *day* for a *year*. But opponents try to evade the force of this passage by saying that the term for "weeks" simply means "sevens," and is only proved by the context to be sevens of years, the word "days" being not expressly mentioned. But Professor Birks has clearly shown that this is a mere evasion of the evidence afforded by this passage. It is true that the Hebrew word here used is not the one *most frequently* employed in Scripture for a week of days, but it *is* employed in that sense. In fact, wherever it occurs in other passages this is the meaning of it.[1] Both in the Authorised Version and in the Revised Version it is here translated not "sevens," but "weeks" in ordinary acceptation of that term, namely, a week of days. Professor Birks says: "It is perfectly true that the original word does not define the unit, and *might* mean seven of any measure of time; but it is also a fact, that in Scripture, where it occurs about ten times, it is invariably *used* to denote seven *days*; we are therefore bound to suppose that it is used in the same sense in Daniel ix., and thus the argument retains all its force. Seventy sevens of *days* was the symbol employed to denote seventy sevens of years."

It may be well to add to our notice of the *year-day* principle of interpretation the following excellent summary of it by Professor Birks:—

"1. That the Church, after the ascension of Christ, was intended of God to be kept in the lively expectation of His speedy return in glory.

"2. That in the Divine counsels a long period of nearly two thousand years was to intervene between the first and the second advent, and to be marked by a dispensation of grace to the Gentiles.

"3. That in order to strengthen the faith and hope of the Church under the long delay, a large part of the whole interval was prophetically announced, but in such a manner that its true length might not be understood, till its own close seemed to be drawing near.

[1] Similarly a distinguished modern Hebrew scholar says on this passage, "Elsewhere in the Bible the word 'week' always means a week of days." Bevan on Daniel, p. 145.

"4. That in the symbolical prophecies of Daniel and St. John other times were revealed along with this, and included under one common maxim of interpretation.

"5. That the periods thus figuratively revealed are exclusively those in Daniel and St. John, which relate to the general history of the Church between the time of the prophet and the Second Advent.

"6. That in these predictions, each 'day' represents a natural year, as in the vision of Ezekiel, that a 'month' denotes *thirty* and a 'time' *three hundred and sixty years.*"[1]

Professor Birks gives the following list of the passages where this *year-day* principle of interpretation is to be applied, according to the above explanation of it in Daniel and the Revelation.

In Daniel:—

1. The "time, times, and half a time" of the Little Horn. Daniel vii. 25, R.V.

2. The "two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings" of the desolation of the sanctuary. Daniel viii. 14.

3. The "Seventy Weeks" of Daniel ix.

4. The "time, times, and a half" of Daniel xii. 7.

5. The 1,290 days of Daniel xii. 11.

6. The 1,335 days of Daniel xii. 12.

In the Revelation:—

1. The "ten days" tribulation of the Church of Smyrna. Revelation ii. 10.

2. The "five months" duration of the scorpion torment. Revelation ix. 5, 10.

3. The "hour and a day and a month and a year" of the invasion of horsemen from the Euphrates. Revelation ix. 15.

4. The "forty and two months" desolation of the holy city, and the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of the prophesying of the Witnesses. Revelation xi. 2, 3.

5. The "three days and a half" during which their dead bodies lie unburied. Revelation xi. 9, 11.

6. The "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of the sojourn of the Woman in the wilderness, and the same period

[1] *First Elements of Prophecy*, p. 311.

expressed as a "time, times, and half a time." Revelation xii. 6 and 14.

7. The "forty and two months" career of the Beast in Revelation xiii. 6.

Of these mysterious periods Birks remarks that "they either occur in the midst of the symbols themselves, or bear plain marks of a singular, uncommon, and peculiar phraseology, or are prefaced by words importing concealment." Indeed, the only passage in which these mystic periods are not found imbedded in the midst of the symbols, but in the interpretation of them, is in Daniel xii., which is, in consequence, made much of by opponents. But, as Birks well remarks, the periods named are there introduced by a double notice that they have a hidden meaning: "The words are closed and sealed till the time of the end." "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." [1]

The historical interpretation of nearly all the above-named chronological prophecies will be found more or less fully explained in the present volume. We see, therefore, that with regard to these mysterious periods in Daniel and St. John, to which the *year-day* principle applies, the circumstances of the case, the symbolical surroundings, or the admonition that wisdom is needed for understanding them, *all point to a mystical or hidden meaning* which requires to be unlocked. And the wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years, "each day for a year," according to the sentence inflicted after the return of the spies—the lying of Ezekiel upon his side for so many days, "each day for a year"—and the prophecy of "seventy weeks" or 490 days, where also each day represents a year—all these instances obviously *suggest* that the key to unlock the deep meaning is the *year-day* principle of interpretation. The facts of history, as we have already shown, and shall show

[1] Daniel xii. 9, 10. It should be noted that Daniel is told to *seal* the prophecies, indicating that in his day it was too soon for these predictions of time to begin to be understood. But in the Book of the Revelation, dealing as it does with the course of this dispensation, St. John is told to "*seal not* up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand," *i.e.*, the time when they would begin to receive fulfilment. And accordingly a distinct blessing is promised upon the study of them. Revelation i. 3, xxii. 10.

further, prove that *the key fits the lock*, and thus confirm the truth of this method of interpreting these chronological prophecies.

That there was a mystical meaning in these periods was suspected in very early times by some of the more clear-sighted students of prophecy, and since the light of the Reformation broke out, the question has been investigated by the great mind of Sir I. Newton, and by a long line of prophetical expositors of the highest intellectual ability and personal piety, who have satisfied themselves that the historical or *year-day* method of interpreting these prophecies is the true one. We confidently anticipate that from the foregoing data, and from the further application of the principle in the course of the present volume, our readers will arrive at the same conclusion.

In the communication already noticed (p. 135) the Futurist writer ventures to say:—"The year-day theory has repeatedly failed in its historical application—failed, indeed, in every instance in which it has had time to do so." As to the first part of this assertion, namely, that there have been failures, this, in so difficult a subject, does not in the least prove that the principle is wrong. If a difficult problem, depending upon certain rules of arithmetic, were set to a class, the fact of many wrong answers being sent in would not prove those rules wrong; but would only show that those who sent in right answers were possessed of superior skill in applying the methods of calculation. Just so with regard to the application of the year-day theory to these prophecies. The further assertion that it has "failed in every instance" is simply contrary to fact, as we trust our readers will recognise from the various instances given in this volume. One of these is the career of the Beast. As early as 1571, a prophetic writer, David Chytræus, suggested the decree of Phocas, of which we shall presently speak more fully, as the possible starting-point for the 1,260 years of the Papal period. This anticipation, confirmed and developed by succeeding writers of eminence, has been remarkably verified, as we shall show. In fact, as Birks says, what might have been anticipated from the foundation principle of the year-day theory, namely, the principle of progressive development of the meaning of such prophecies, and increasing

certainty as time should roll on, has actually taken place; so that, from being at first indistinct and uncertain, the *year-day* theory may now be regarded as firmly established, more especially by the exhaustive researches of Birks himself, Elliott, and Guinness. Let us see how it applies to the career of the Beast.

In connection with the 1,260 "days," *i.e.*, as we have shown, years, assigned in prophecy as the characteristic period of the "little horn," or Beast of the Revelation, it is highly necessary to bear in mind the distinction between the *career* or *time of prospering* of a Power, and its *existence*. A man's public career is *preceded* by existence in infancy and childhood, and is often *succeeded* by a time of inactivity, weakness, or decrepitude, when the *career* may well be said to have ended, though life be prolonged. Just so with the Antichrist or Papacy. Its spirit was germinating or working, as St. Paul and St. John explains it, as early as the Apostolic age; but its *career*, or characteristic period of prosperity, did not begin till centuries after. It may now be said to have entered upon the epoch of its decay and final destruction.[1]

The 1,260 years of the Beast's career of prosperity, reckoned from the position of completed exaltation given to the Papacy in the time of the Emperor Phocas, 606–610, expired with that crisis in history which brought about the downfall of the Temporal Power, 1866–1870. The loss of the Temporal Power was the knell which told forth to the world the approaching doom of the Papacy. It was the beginning of "the time of the end," that time which was thus referred to in Daniel's vision of the Little Horn that was to speak words against the Most High, and to wear out the saints of the Most High: "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it to the end."[2] Some have considered that the word "*consume*" in this passage indicates the gradual process of con-

[1] It should be noted that in the expression, "There was given to him authority to continue forty and two months" (verse 5), the word for "continue" is rendered in the margin of the Revised Version, "to do his works during." So in Grimm's Lexicon it is translated "to exercise activity," which precisely corresponds to the explanation given above.

[2] Daniel vii. 26.

sumption, and that "*destroy*" refers to the final crisis; but this distinction need not be insisted on. Many able expositors take both the expressions together as describing emphatically the utter destruction awaiting that Power. That the end of the long dominion of the Beast will be a gradual process, terminating in a crisis, is sufficiently evident from other considerations. Just as the coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom will be in stages, so to speak, like His first coming, and as the final overthrow of Satan is to be accomplished by distinct steps of downfall, so will the downfall of the Antichrist be similarly brought about. The sentence has been pronounced, but, as in the case of the sentence pronounced by our Lord on Jerusalem, the full carrying out of the sentence is to come afterwards. The judgment has begun. It was notified to the world by the fall of the Temporal Power; but the utter destruction has yet to be accomplished.

The significance of the crisis of the fall of the Temporal Power with regard to the career of the Papacy was largely commented upon in the newspapers of the day; and even in one of the leading *Romish* papers this remarkable statement was put forth: "What has been called the Middle Age [the period *we* call the Dark Age] has come to an end. The date of the Bull [*i.e.*, for assembling the Œcumenical Council of 1870] is the date of its last sigh. Another era begins [the period of decay and destruction]. The Church and State are separated."[1]

In speaking of the 1,260 years measuring-rod of Papal prospering we must, however, bear in mind that with regard to long prophetic periods there are frequently more than one crisis marking the rise of the Power, and from which the beginning of the period may be dated, and consequently more than one corresponding crisis of decline and fall. This feature has been ably and exhaustively treated by Mr. Elliott and Dr. Grattan Guinness in their valuable works. Similarly Dr. Gordon in *Ecce Venit* says, speaking of the 1,260 years of the Papal period: "But as its beginning was in several epoch-marking events, so, applying our measuring line, we must look for its decline in corresponding crises of decadence, each crisis being an alarm bell for admonish-

[1] Quoted by Elliott from the Roman Catholic paper *L'Univers* (*Hor. Apoc.*, 5th Ed. Preface).

ing us to watchfulness. From several initial dates in history, corresponding terminal periods have been correctly anticipated by students of prophecy for the last three hundred years. Nearly two hundred years ago Apocalyptic scholars forecast the years 1790 and 1848 as critical years in the commencing of the downfall of the Papacy,—the first of which, as events proved, brought her under the bloody judgments of the French Revolution, and the second into that other political convulsion which drove the Pope into exile. So, likewise, many expositors concurred in looking for some marked calamity to Rome in 1868–70—the latter year, as history was to prove, being that of the downfall of the Temporal Power of the Pope, the severest blow, in the estimation of many, that has fallen upon Rome in a thousand years. These are illustrations of correct chronological computation which might be greatly multiplied. They suffice to indicate how they err not who, like the prophets, search '*what manner of time*' the Spirit in the Word has signified by the chronology therein given; as they suffice, also, to indicate that our century is solemnly marked as the era of expiring dates, and therefore of startling admonitions to watchful expectations." [1]

At this point it will be interesting to show how remarkably the prominent epoch of the rise of the Papal Antichrist, as effected by the decree of the Emperor Phocas which we have already noticed, was identified by utterances proceeding from the Papacy itself. The subject is so important that we cannot do better than quote at large the following observations of Elliott. Speaking of the forebodings of that sagacious "man of the age," Pope Gregory the Great, as to the manifestation of the Antichrist being at hand, he says: "A notable occasion had arisen to call forth the public declaration of his sentiments and his fears on this subject. The Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, had just then assumed the title to himself (though not, we may be assured, in the full meaning of the words) of *Universal Bishop*. Against this Gregory—as indeed Pope Pelagius just before him—raised his most solemn protestations. In letters written and published

[1] *Ecce Venit*, p. 205. See further, on more than one crisis of rise and decline in the career of the Papacy, and on the fulfilment of anticipations based on the year-day interpretation, p. 254 of the present volume.

at different times, from 590 (or, rather, including that written in Pelagius' Pontificale, from 580) to nearly the end of the century, and addressed to the Greek Emperor and Empress, the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, the Bishop of Thessalonica, and many others, he declared before Christendom, that whosoever, in his elation of spirit, called himself, or sought to be called, *universal bishop*, or *universal priest*, that man was the likeness, the precursor, and the preparer for Antichrist: that he bore the same characteristic of boundless pride and self-exaltation: that the tendency of his assumption, if consented to, was that which was the grand object of Antichrist, viz., to *withdraw all members of the Church from its only true head*, CHRIST JESUS, and to attach and connect them instead with *himself*. Moreover, it was stated or implied in his letters that he regarded the *title* spoken of as one of the '*names of blasphemy*' connected with the ten-horned Beast in the Apocalypse; the *self-exaltation* manifested above all his fellow-men as that predicted of the *Man of Sin* in St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians; and the consenting thereto as that *departure from the faith*, and that *apostasy*, which was predicted alike in the same epistle and in that to Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 1). As to the Greek Patriarch's having so acted, he said that it surprised him not: that he only saw in the fact prophecy fulfilling; and recognised in it a sign of *Antichrist being close at hand*. Under which persuasion he could not but the rather raise his protesting voice.[1]

"Oh! sagacious and most true observer! sagacious in perceiving that the effect of any such allowed and recognised pretensions to a universal episcopate would, as regards *men*, involve the probable prostration beneath it of all authority, secular as well as ecclesiastical; and, as regards *Christ*, the certain withdrawal of the Church into apostasy from Him, its only true Lord and head! But what then, when, in spite of this declaration, thus pressed as it had been on Christendom, thus dispersed, thus repeated, and even enregistered in the canon-law of the Romish Church, this very title was, within ten or fifteen years after, officially conferred on and assumed by Boniface III., *Gregory's*

[1] Elliott gives the references to the original for all these extracts from the letters of Pope Gregory.

own successor in the Roman Episcopate, the Greek Emperor [Phocas] himself conferring it: assumed by him, not in its restricted meaning, as by the Eastern Patriarch previously; but in its full and plain meaning of *universal episcopal supremacy* over the whole professing Church on earth, and as a title henceforth never to be abandoned! Surely the fact was one calculated to excite both the ponderings and misgivings of thinking men: and to awaken inquiry whether that phantasm, the very Antichrist of prophecy, might not even then have been brought into existence in the world, albeit under a form in some respects little expected." [1]

We have now briefly reviewed the *position*, *character*, and 1,260 years' *career* of the Beast seen by St. John in prophetic vision; and have shown that in all these respects the symbolic prophecy exactly accords with the great Papal Antichrist. Before passing to the consideration of the complicated question of the Beast's "horns" and "heads," a symbolism which *fixes the time of its rise into power as being the very time when the Papacy assumed its pre-eminent position*, and so still further demonstrates the identity, we will briefly notice the description of the *second* Beast of Revelation xiii., whose character and actions are so closely connected with the first Beast. We shall see that here, too, the identification of the Papacy with the Antichrist is confirmed; and that as the first Beast was the revival of the old Pagan imperial tyranny in a new form, that of the Pope, so the second Beast was the revival of the Pagan sacerdotal tyranny in that of the Romish Priesthood. For it must always be remembered that a *Beast* both in Daniel and the Revelation is a symbol, not of some one individual person, but of *a world-wide tyrannical Power*, represented for the time being by one or more leading individuals.[2]

The chief thing to be noticed about this second Beast is its *subservience* to "*the* Beast," *i.e.*, to the first Beast. All its actions are in support and exaltation of the first Beast. And if that first Beast is, as we are proving it to be, the Roman world-empire under its last headship, that of the Pope, it will readily be seen how

[1] Elliott, *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iii. pp. 401-404. 5th Ed.

[2] See pages 99, 102.

exactly the second Beast of St. John's prophetic vision symbolised the world-wide Power of the corporate body of the Romish *Priesthood*, whose main object has ever been to bolster up the absolute supremacy of the Pope, thereby aggrandising their own position in the world as his authorised ministers and subordinate rulers.

Here again let us notice a remarkable identification from the mouth of Rome herself. We have already shown that the decree of Phocas, confirming and completing the universal supremacy of the Pope of Rome, constituted a marked stage of the rise and manifestation of the Papal Antichrist, and that this was anticipated in the warning words of Gregory the Great. But not only did Gregory thus recognise the features of the *first* Beast, as they began to come clearly into view, but he also, all unknown to himself, foreshadowed the meaning of the second *Beast*. He wrote further these remarkable words: "All things which have been predicted are taking place. The King of Pride is at hand, and, what seems dreadful to be said, an *army of priests* is prepared for him,"[1] in other words, an organised Power, that of *the Romish priesthood*, is ready to support his claims with all their energies.

Let us briefly examine the description given by St. John of his vision of this second Beast. He says (Rev. xiii. 11): "I saw another beast [or world-wide Power] coming up out of the earth." The coming up from the *earth* is well explained by Lange, Alford, Fausset, and others, as meaning that it rose into prominence out of a *consolidated and ordered state of things*, such as was the ecclesiastical organisation out of which the Romish priesthood grew up into power; as contrasted with the "*sea*" of anarchy and commotion of peoples, out of which the political supremacy of the first Beast, or Papal imperial power, was symbolised as having arisen.

This second Beast, which St. John saw rising up into power after the first, is admitted to be identical with the *False Prophet* mentioned afterwards in Revelation xvi. 13, and xix. 20. A comparison of the passages places this beyond doubt. The description "and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon," at once reminds us of our Lord's warning to

[1] "Omnia enim quæ predicta sunt fiunt. Rex superbiæ prope est; et, quod dici nefas est, sacerdotum est præparatus exercitus": cited by Elliott, vol. i. page 403. 5th Ed.

His Church: "Beware of *false prophets*, which come unto you in sheep's clothes, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Here again the voice of Rome identifies the fulfilment in her own system. The same Gregory who spoke of the subservient "army of priests" as being prepared for the King of Pride thus denounced the ecclesiastical hypocrisy of his time—"Beneath the meanest garments we conceal a haughty heart: under the aspect of a sheep we conceal the fangs of a wolf"—showing that the description of the second Beast or False Prophet quoted above finds its counterpart in the Romish Priesthood. And, indeed, that body which bolstered up the pretensions of the Papacy by the issue of the False Decretals, which has falsified history in order to support its claims, which performs false miracles and utters false doctrines, might well be symbolically designated, and presented to St. John in vision, as the False Prophet.[1]

We read further: "And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight," that is, he performs similar acts of authority under his supervision and with his approval. A recent utterance of Cardinal Vaughan affords a striking illustration of the meaning of this passage. Speaking of the claims of the Romish *priesthood*, he is reported in the papers as saying, "Catholics understand ordination to be the bestowal upon men, first, of a power to change bread and wine, so that in their place our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ becomes truly and substantially present on the altar in His divine and human natures, and to offer Him up in true Eucharistic sacrifice to the Eternal Father; second, of a power to forgive the sins of man with a divine efficacy." The Pope claims just these same powers. Truly the second Beast "exerciseth all the authority of the first Beast in his sight."

Then follows a description given at length of what constitutes, as we have already said, the distinguishing mark of the second Beast, and that is its support of the first Beast, and its deter-

[1] If the symbolism of the duality of the horns is to be pressed, it may be taken to foreshadow the two classes, namely, the *secular* and the *regular* or monastic clergy. But as horns are a symbol of power, it may mean no more than that while professing to exercise their power with lamb-like gentleness, their dragon-like words and actions would reveal their true character, and show satanic hatred against the truth.

mination to force homage and reverence to be paid to it. The description shows that this was to be accompanied by three chief means: by *idolatrous exaltation of the Pope*, by *miraculous exhibitions*, and by bitter and relentless *persecution*, just the very characteristics of the Romish priesthood throughout its history.

In verse 12 we are told of the *idolatrous exaltation* of the Papal Beast: "And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death stroke was healed." We have already commented on the homage paid to the first Beast.[1] It is here foretold further that this worship would be *enforced* by the subservient priesthood. As to the description of the first Beast as one "whose death stroke was healed," it means the revival of the despotism of the Cæsars in that of the Popes, as we shall prove presently in explaining the symbolism of "horns" and "heads."

In verses 13, 14, we have a description of the *deceiving miracles* that were to be wrought by the second Beast or False Prophet: "And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived" (R.V.).

Here let us notice, in the first place, an important and essential consideration for the understanding of this prophetic vision. If the figure of the second Beast was symbolic, as all must admit it to have been, it is only natural and logical that the terms describing its actions should also have a symbolic meaning. It would be as reasonable to interpret literally the eating of the flesh of "the woman drunken with the blood of the saints" and other actions described in Revelation xvii., as to force a literal

[1] See page 127 on the homage paid to the Pope. As an instance of its being enforced by the priesthood, we may mention that even in our own country the voice of the priesthood, as represented by Cardinal Manning, has not hesitated to say: "We declare, maintain, and decide, that it is necessary for the salvation of every individual that he should render obedience to the Pope of Rome."

interpretation on the actions of this symbolic Beast. What we have to do is to seek with care for the analogous meaning which is prophetically indicated and illustrated by the figures employed, according to the caution twice over enjoined in the prophecies relating to the Beast: "Here is the mind [or *meaning*, R.V. *marg.*] which hath wisdom."[1]

In the description of the actions of the second Beast two outstanding and typical events of the Old Testament are obviously brought before our minds—one the calling down of fire by Elijah, the other the setting up of the image of Nebuchadnezzar. The former was a conspicuous example of a Divine commission and authority miraculously attested by God, the latter of the deification of a man, and a demand of absolute surrender to his despotic rule. Both these examples illustrate the actions ascribed to the symbolic Beast which St. John saw. We shall show that they both foreshadowed the actions of the Romish *priesthood*, the Power symbolised by this second Beast or False Prophet.

All history shows that the Romish priesthood have ever appealed to miracles as a proof that their teaching and authority is attested by God. The historian Mosheim says: "Every objection was silenced by them with appeal to two things—the authority of the Church and miracles." The late Sir Arthur Blackwood well remarked on this point as follows: "Miracles wrought by the man, alive or dead, were essential before he could be recognised and canonised as a saint. The speaking images, the winking Madonnas, the cures said to be effected by pieces of the cross, holy rags and bones of dead men and women, that have been paraded and extolled wherever the Romish Church has extended her sway, are notorious. And that the delusions wrought thereby were not confined to the dark ages is equally well known. Not only did the benighted crowds of those days fall down and worship at the shrines, and give themselves over body and soul to the false priesthood that ruled over them and hugely profited by these lying wonders: the same delusion prevails even in the nineteenth century, when the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples, the

[1] Revelation xvii. 9, and xiii. 18.

apparitions of the Virgin at Knock, and at Lourdes, still attract the homage of crowds both of the ignorant and the educated, and give rise to pilgrimages."

The calling down of fire from heaven to earth in the sight of men, which was the miracle exhibited by the symbolic Beast or False Prophet seen by St. John in his prophetic vision, was but the prototype and foreshadowing of the miracles by which the false prophets of the Romish priesthood would "deceive them that dwell upon the earth," and bolster up their claim to Divine authority. The pretended miracle of the Holy Fire, still practised by the priesthood of the sister apostasy of the Greek Church, is the exact counterpart of that performed by the False Prophet, or second Beast, of St. John's vision; and Captain Conder, who witnessed the exhibition at Jerusalem, tells us that it used to be practised by the Romish priesthood as well. And though this miracle is now disowned by them, yet their public ceremony of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, as described by Canon Mozley, who witnessed it at Naples, is an equally gross and daring imposture.[1]

Such have been the miracles whereby the Romish priesthood have sought to establish their authority as accredited ministers and agents of God, and this was foreshadowed in the prophetic vision of St. John by the symbolic second Beast calling down fire from heaven. But it is also shown in the description of St. John's vision that the influence thus acquired was used by the second Beast to deceive the nations into making an image to the first Beast. This, as we have already remarked, calls to mind the other great typical event of Old Testament history, namely the setting up of Nebuchadnezzar's image in the plain of Dura. The exaltation of that image, and the compulsory adulation and worship, constituted an ideal picture of the deification of a man and a demand of absolute surrender to his despotic rule. History shows that this has been precisely the action of the Romish priesthood with regard to the position of the Pope. They have

[1] It should be noted that the calling down of fire by Elijah at Carmel as a sign in proof of his commission from God is the miracle here referred to; while his calling down fire on his enemies (2 Kings i. 10) is that alluded to in chapter xi. in the description of the Witnesses.

ever used the influence, which by false miracles and superstitious teaching they have acquired over the multitudes, to induce them to set the Pope up on a pedestal and make an idol or image of him, so to speak, and to demand from them absolute surrender to his claims and power. The historian Mosheim says: "the monks, who from their supposed sanctity had the greatest influence with the multitude, *held up the Pope to their veneration even as a God.*" Thus what was actually done by Nebuchadnezzar, and also by the subordinates of Pagan emperors, has been virtually done by the Romish priesthood, as foretold by the symbolic action of the second Beast in St. John's vision.

But it is further said (verse 15): "And it was given unto him [the second Beast] to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Bishop Wordsworth's comment on this is exactly to the point. He says: "The image of Nebuchadnezzar, and those of the emperors, to which worship was required to be paid on pain of death, were mere images. The Pope may be said to be set up by his clergy as a *living* realisation of the symbol." The following specimen of Romish exaltation of the Pope from a widely circulated journal, the *Annales Catholiques*, almost reads like a commentary on this symbolic vision of the speaking image: "As Vicar of Jesus Christ the Pope is truly on earth *the sign of God.* Earth has put on his forehead the Kingly diadem. God has caused His own attributes to be reflected in him. God is truth, and the sovereign Pontiff is the organ of truth, for he is the *infallible mouth* which defines and utters to the world the dogmas and principles of eternal order."

A still more striking example of the fulfilment of this symbolic action of the symbolic second Beast seen by John in this vision is afforded by the Patriarch of Venice, recently appointed by Pope Leo XIII. In his inaugural sermon this prelate gave utterance to the following amazing statements:—"The Pope is not simply the representative of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, he is Jesus Christ Himself, under the veil of the flesh, and who by means of a being common to humanity continues His ministry amongst men. . . . Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ

who is speaking. Does he teach? It is Jesus Christ who teaches. Does he confer grace or pronounce an anathema? It is Jesus Christ Himself who is pronouncing the anathema and conferring the grace. Hence consequently, when one speaks of the Pope, it is not necessary to examine, but to obey . . . there must be no cavilling at the declared will of the Pope . . . His decisions are not to be criticised, or his ordinances disputed. Therefore by Divine ordination all, no matter how august the person may be—whether he wear a crown or be invested with the purple, or be clothed in the sacred vestments;—all must be subject to him who has had all things put under him."[1] What is this but "saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast," that they should set up the Pope on a pedestal, revere him as God, make an idol of him, and when he speaks, obey his voice as the voice of God?

Such language irrestistibly calls to mind the scene narrated in Acts xii. 21, when "Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying, *The voice of a god and not of a man.*" We know how the toleration of such impious flattery was visited by God on that occasion.

Thus from time to time, throughout the period of the Papacy, the image of the Pope, exalted by his subordinate priesthood, has uttered its decrees and demanded allegiance on pain of excommunication and anathema, that is, of spiritual and temporal death, for extirpation of heretics has been a standard doctrine of Papal teaching. Thus has been fulfilled St. John's prophetic vision of the second Beast inducing the multitudes to make an idol, or image, of the first Beast, which "should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed."[2]

[1] Quoted by the Italian Correspondent in *Evangelical Christendom* for January, 1895.

[2] As a crowning instance of the fulfilment of this symbolical prophecy, Bishop Wordsworth well compares the proclamation of the decree of the Infallibility of the Pope by the Romish hierarchy at the Œcumenical Council in 1870. It is remarkable that the early commentator on the Apocalypse, Hippolytus, on whom the Futurist school largely depend for their interpretation, amidst much darkness and confusion of exposition,—for he had not the light of

The further description of the action of the second Beast is such an exact picture of the system of "*boycotting*," which has been uniformly practised by the body of the Romish priesthood wherever practicable up to the present day, that it needs but few words to show that in that body is conspicuously fulfilled this characteristic of the symbolic second Beast. We read (verses 16, 17): "And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name." The allusion is evidently to the then common practice of slaves or soldiers receiving a brand or mark on their bodies in token of subjection to their master or monarch. Subjection of the multitudes to the first Beast, enforcéd with pains and penalties by the second Beast, is clearly the idea signified by this transaction in St. John's vision; and, in exact accordance with this, we find that enforced subjection to the head of the Papal system by means of penalties, "boycotting," and persecution, visited upon those who decline to submit to his authority and teaching, has ever been a distinguishing feature in the action of the body of the Romish priesthood.

Thus the two symbolic Beasts of this chapter, as shown by their *position*, *character*, *actions* and *career*, find their accurate fulfilment in the Pope and his subordinate clergy.

The last verse of the chapter (verse 18) contains one more mark of identification, namely, the enigmatical description of *the number* of the first Beast, or, as it is more fully expressed in the previous

history as we have,—nevertheless perceived that the living and speaking image must be symbolical. He even recognised the truth that the image of the first Beast "whose death stroke was healed" referred to a revival of the imperial power of the Cæsars, which we shall show to be true of the Papacy; and he explained that making the image speak, meant that "he should be powerful." (Hippolytus, vol. ii. pp. 29, 30. T. & T. Clark.)

Further meanings of the symbolism of the *fire from heaven* and the *image* have been suggested by Elliott and others, making the former to include the claim of Divine sanction for the mass, and for the scathing denunciations of the Papacy, and the image to refer to the councils as being a *representation* of the Papacy, and speaking with Divine authority; but we think the explanation that has been given above is simpler and preferable.

verse, "the number of his name." We read, "Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man [we have already explained that this cannot mean that some single individual of the future is meant. See page 105]; and his number is six hundred and sixty and six" (R.V.). We know that *name* stands for *character* in Scripture, and, in the Greek language, *letters* are used to indicate *numbers*. We are therefore led to infer that some name, or character, spelt out by Greek letters which make up the number 666, will indicate some remarkable characteristic of the first Beast.

If the guess of those early Fathers, Irenæus and Hippolytus, be correct (a point about which we need not be positive, though we shall show good reason for it), that the number of the Beast, 666, expressed in Greek numerals by letters of the alphabet, might be Λατεῖνος (Lateinos)[1] we can easily see how aptly this "name," or *character*, is applicable to the man at the head of the Papal imperial Power, and who represents it in his person. Alford has some good remarks on this. After mentioning the reason given by Irenæus for his guess, namely, that "they are Latins who now rule," he adds that Irenæus could not have foreseen how this name *Lateinos* "unites under itself also the *character* of the later Papal Roman Empire [*i.e.*, the first Beast of Revelation xiii.], as revived and kept up by the agency of its false prophet the priesthood [*i.e.*, the second Beast of Revelation xiii. subservient to the first]. The Latin Empire, the Latin Church, Latin Christianity, have ever been its commonly current appellations." The Pope still speaks and writes, especially in his official capacity, in Latin. Latin is stamped upon the whole Papal system. Its decrees, its canons, its hymns, its Mass, its litanies, its prayers, Ave Maria, Pater-noster, etc., are all in Latin. Surely it must be obvious to all who consider this marked character of the system that the head of such a system might well be prophetically and enigmatically indicated by the number of the name *Lateinos* as signifying this *Latin* character. Taken by itself, of course no inference could be drawn from the coincidence, since

[1] The numerical value of the Greek letters is as follows:—λ = 30, α = 1, τ = 300, ε = 5, ι = 10, ν = 50, ο = 70, ς = 200, all which numbers added together make up 666.

many other names can be spelt with letters making up 666, but, taken in connection with all the other detailed characteristics, it may be regarded as at least a remarkable confirmation of the evidence we are bringing forward that the Beast is the Papacy.[1]

It may be well here to present very briefly the contrast of the Futurist view with regard to the description of the two Beasts which we have been considering.

According to their literal system of interpretation the first Beast means some future single individual Antichrist who shall be an incarnation of Satan, a blaspheming infidel who will mount the throne of the world. The second Beast is to be his prophet, a kind of magician satanically endowed, who will actually and really call down fire from heaven, and perform miracles. He will cause to be set up somewhere an image of the first Beast, like that of Nebuchadnezzar, and by his infernal power he is to confer on it the gift of life and breath and speech, so that with its own voice it will summon all the inhabitants of the world to come and worship it, else they will be killed. Moreover, they tell us there are to be branding establishments instituted in the world, and none are to buy or sell except those who submit to be branded with the mysterious mark of the Beast, by hot irons or in some other way. *How* the eight hundred millions or more who inhabit the earth are to be forced to come and submit to such treatment, or to be killed

[1] As misleading statements are sometimes made about the views of Irenæus and Hippolytus on this point, it may be well to quote their words. Irenæus says: "*Lateinos* has the number six hundred and sixty-six, and it is a very probable solution." He also suggests another, "*Teitan*, too, among all the names which are found among us, is rather worthy of credit. . . . This name has so much to recommend it, there is a strong degree of probability that from among the many we infer that perchance he who is to come shall be called *Teitan*." (Irenæus, v. 30. T. & T. Clark.)

Hippolytus, a disciple of Irenæus, inclines to *Lateinos*. He says: "Those who at present still hold the power are *Latins*. If then we take the name as the name of a single man, it becomes *Lateinos*." But he wisely adds that there was no certainty about the matter, and they must wait for the mystery to be revealed by time. (Hippolytus, T. & T. Clark, § 50.)

Amongst some spurious or doubtful writings attributed to Hippolytus the Greek word for "I deny" is suggested; but the numerical value of its component letters does not correspond to 666, and it is unworthy of consideration.

if they refuse to worship the image, does not appear. Surely the extravagance and unreasonableness of such expectations as these are enough to condemn any system of interpretation that leads to them; and, if no other solution could be found, should induce us to suspend our judgment, and admit our inability to explain the prophecy. But since there is another solution, and since we have shown that all the many details concerning the position, character, and actions of these two symbolic Beasts seen by St. John in vision can be found accurately fulfilled in the career of the Imperial Power of the Pope of Rome, and of the Romish hierarchy subservient to him, surely sober judgment should lead us to conclude that here we have the true meaning and fulfilment of the prophetic vision.[1]

[1] The above brief summary of Futurist interpretation is gathered from the writings of some of the most eminent authors of that school, whose works have been frequently referred to in these pages. Others among them evade the difficulties involved in their literal system of interpretation by not attempting to explain details. Others try to lessen the extravagance and improbability by saying that only throughout Christendom will every human being have to come and worship the speaking image or be killed. Others suggest that images may be set up in various centres over the world, accompanied by means of branding, to be enforced under penalty of death for all who refuse. They very generally hold that the miraculous image is to be set up in a rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem, and that it will be the *abomination of desolation* spoken of by Daniel and our Lord,—a view which we have shown to be erroneous (see pp. 56, 77).

We trust our readers will be convinced that this whole system of Futurism resting upon literal interpretation is based upon a wrong foundation, and therefore cannot be upheld in the estimate of sober judgment and of sound Scriptural investigation.

CHAPTER II

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE IMAGE, DANIEL II.; OF THE FOUR BEASTS, DANIEL VII.; AND OF THE LAST HEAD OF THE FOURTH BEAST, REVELATION XIII., XVII.

LET us now examine the complicated symbolism of the "horns" and "heads" of the first Beast, as given in the first verse of Revelation xiii., a symbolism by which the precise time at which the Beast was to be manifested in the world was mysteriously foreshadowed: "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy." If we show that this symbolism, both of *horns* and *heads*, prove that the *time* when this Beast was to rise into power is the very time when the Papacy asserted its pre-eminence in the world, then this evidence, in addition to what has gone before, will put the finishing touch to the identification of the Papal Power with the Beast, or Antichrist of prophecy.

This Beast with its "ten horns" evidently corresponds, as we have previously remarked, with Daniel's fourth Beast, or Roman world-empire, which also had ten horns. It is, in fact, as we shall show later on, that empire in its last form.[1] In order, therefore, to arrive at the meaning of the "horns" and "heads" in St. John's vision, we must go back to the vision of the *Four Beasts* in Daniel vii.; and, in order to understand that, we must go back still further, to the previous vision of the *Great Image* in Daniel ii. A right understanding of this first vision, that of the Image, is of the utmost importance; for confusion here leads to confusion in the subsequent prophetic visions.

[1] See page 126.

In the vision of the Image the four successive world-empires of *Babylon*, *Persia*, *Greece*, and *Rome* were symbolised by the four successive metal portions of the figure, *gold*, *silver*, *brass*, and *iron*. The deterioration of the metals indicated decrease and limitation of absolute despotic power in these successive empires. The iron portion, symbolising the empire rule of Rome, consisted of the legs and feet; and the fact that this part of the human figure ends in ten separate toes was employed in the prophetic symbolism to foretell that in its last stage the Roman Empire would enter upon a *subdivided* condition, and be broken up into separate kingdoms, such as exist at the present day.

But there is a further mark of division, and deterioration of concentrated despotic power, that would characterise the fourth empire in its latter stage. The symbolic prophecy speaks of *clay* entering into the composition of the feet and toes, weakening the power and lessening cohesion. As regards this division of clay and iron in the feet, Professor Birks says: "The course of history of the Roman Empire in its natural order points us at once to the period from Constantine to Augustus. . . . The division in the present verse (Dan. ii. 41) arises, not from the separation of the toes, but the mingling of the clay with the iron. Hence it denotes properly the loosened cohesion of government throughout the Empire, now in a state of rapid decline from its original greatness. It was to be patched with foreign and barbarous elements, before the complete separation into many kingdoms. Such, in every particular, are the fact which history reveals."[1]

The lessening of cohesion and diminution of united despotic power became a still more marked characteristic of the Roman Empire of the West, when, under the repeated invasions of Gothic barbarians, it eventually became broken up into that assemblage of separate *kingdoms*, which, as we have said, was symbolised in the vision by the *ten toes*, which has continued ever since, and which will continue till the final crisis arrives.

[1] Similarly the historian Gibbon, referring to the same period, says: "The political union of the Roman world was gradually dissolved, and a principle of *division* was introduced."—*Student's Gibbon*, chap. vii., § 10.

The rise of constitutional governments in these separate kingdoms, and the remarkable development of democratic power in these latter days, has emphasised still further the characteristic of division and the weakening of autocracy, as symbolised by the "miry clay" with which the iron would not mingle so as to "cleave" to each other. Thus we read, verse 43: "And whereas thou sawest the iron [*i.e.* ruling aristocracy] mixed with the miry clay [*i.e.* democracy], they [the former] shall mingle themselves with the seed of men [*i.e.* with democracy, as is the case in constitutional governments]; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay." Aristocracy and democracy are each useful in constitutional governments, but they are opposite elements, beneficially counteracting each other, but not absolutely uniting.

It is generally agreed amongst commentators, including those of the Futurist school, that in Daniel "kings" and "kingdoms" are almost interchangeable terms. Thus, for instance, in the vision of the four Beasts we read that they are "four kings," and then immediately afterwards the fourth Beast is explained as being the fourth "kingdom." Hence in this vision of the Image the time of the subdivided *kingdoms* is, in verse 44, spoken of as "the days of these *kings*," referring to the period symbolised by the ten toes mentioned in the previous verses, at the close of which period Christ's kingdom would be set up.[1]

As to the number *ten*, it has been pointed out by Bishop Wordsworth, and other able expositors, that inasmuch as this subdivision of the Roman empire was symbolised by the divided toes of the human figure of the Image, the number "*ten*" had to be used from the very nature of the symbol employed. And so, in the corresponding vision of the four Beasts, the same number was naturally again used, and the "ten" horns of the fourth Beast referred to the same subdivision of the Roman Empire into separate kingdoms as was symbolised by the ten toes of the Image. Hence, as Wordsworth shows, to press the meaning of the number to *exactly ten*, *no more*, *no less*, as Futurists do, is to strain the imagery unduly, which is a common

[1] See Daniel ii. 41–44. The symbolic use of the term "kings" in prophecy will be found more fully explained at page 165.

mistake in interpreting symbols and parables. The number "ten" is often used in an inexact sense, no stress being laid on that precise number, as in 1 Samuel i. 8, Job xix. 3. But, further than this, it has been demonstrated by Professor Birks, Dr. Guinness, and others, that the number "ten" *has* in a most remarkable way characterised the subdivision of the Roman Empire into the kingdoms of Europe; and, by an exhaustive examination, it has been shown that no other number could have been so correctly employed.[1]

In the vision of *the Image* it should be noted that the image itself is represented as remaining standing all through the succession of Empires, till the Stone, symbolising the coming of Christ, falls at the end, and breaks them all up together. Hence we may see the mistake of those who speak of a future *re-construction* of the Image under a future individual Antichrist. There is no destruction of the Image till the stone falls, therefore there is no reconstruction of it in the symbolism.

The successive metal portions of the Image denote successive *additions of territory* as each Empire is formed, and also a *transfer of supreme power* to the new Empire. Each metal as it attains supreme power rules also over the portions of the Image above it. Thus the *silver* (or Persian) portion denotes the fresh territory added by the Medo-Persian Empire to that of Babylon, and the transfer of power over both to the new Empire thus extended. So also with the *brass*. Similarly the *iron* portion of the Image denotes the *fresh* territory of the Western Empire of Rome, which was *added to the Eastern territories symbolised by the previous metals*; and also that the supreme power over *the whole* was to be transferred to the new world-empire of Rome. Hence it is clear that, since the *ten toes* belong to the *iron* portion of the image, the kingdoms which they symbolise are to be sought, *not in the Eastern territories of the previous Empires*, but only in that part of the Roman Empire

[1] See *Approaching End of the Age*, Appendix, *Fallacies of Futurism*, by Dr. Guinness; and *The First Two Visions of Daniel*, by Birks, p. 150. The only ground for the confident assertion by Futurist authors and speakers that *no* such division has ever taken place is based upon an error which we shall presently expose. Page 163.

which was not included in the Grecian brass, or Persian silver, or Babylonian gold, that is to say, *only in the Western Roman Empire*, chiefly represented by modern Europe.

This was pointed out long ago by the acute intellect of Sir Isaac Newton, and is absolutely necessary for understanding the meaning of the symbolism of the Image; but it is persistently ignored by those who oppose the Historical system of interpretation.

It is lamentable to notice how some Futurist writers, in their anxiety to discredit the Historical view, are led into misrepresentation of it. Thus the author of *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries*, after alluding to the incorporation of the Eastern and Western portions into one united Roman Empire, as we have explained above, adds, at page 216, the following misleading statement: "Although the fact is well known to historical students, it is, nevertheless, strangely ignored by a school of interpreters [referring to the Historical school] who, in working out their scheme, assume that the Empire included no more than its western half. It is needless to remark that such an idea, apart from its historic falsity, would, if admitted, destroy the significance of the two legs of the Image." In our explanation given above we have shown that the Historical view involves no such idea as is suggested, and distinctly recognises the Eastern territories as being included in the Roman Empire. As to "the significance of the two Legs," as referring to the Eastern and Western portions of the Empire, this, too, is quite a mistake, as we will endeavour to make clear.

We meet with a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding with regard to the meaning of the symbolism of the Image in Futurist writings. They first assert that the *two* legs of the Image must refer to the fact that the Roman Empire in the course of its history became separated into the Empire of the *East* and that of the *West*. Then they say that five of the kingdoms into which it was to be divided, according to the symbolism of the toes, must therefore be looked for in the territory of the Eastern Empire, and five in that of the West; and, since no such division as this has occurred, they argue that the subdivision of the Roman Empire into the kingdoms foretold by the prophecy has never been fulfilled. They add the attempted *reductio ad absurdum* that the

Historical view of the kingdoms symbolised by the toes being in the Western portion of the Empire would make out that the ten toes are on one foot.

It will not be difficult to show how mistaken all these criticisms are. In the first place, the history of the Roman Empire, which proves that it continued one and undivided for some centuries before it became separated into the Eastern and Western portions, obviously does not correspond to the configuration of the two iron legs of the Image. This of itself is enough to show the mistake of supposing that the two legs symbolise this division of the Empire.[1]

But, further than this, it is essential to remember that we are not warranted in laying stress upon any particular figuration in the parts of the Image *unless the Divine interpretation authorises us to do so by calling attention to it.* The interpretation dwells upon the division into ten toes, because that part of the figure was obviously adapted to symbolise the subdivided stage of the fourth world-empire, during which most important events were to take place. But it directs no special attention whatever to the duality of the legs, which is simply a necessary feature from the nature of the symbol employed; and we have no more right, therefore, to interpret the two legs as meaning the Eastern and Western Empires, than to try to make something out of the ten fingers in which the arms of the silver (or Persian) portion of the Image ended, a particular of the figuration on which no stress is laid in the Divine interpretation. We trust that it has now been sufficiently shown that the common Futurist statement that the symbolism of the ten toes has never been fulfilled because there

[1] It is apparently with a view to overcome this difficulty that the author of *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries* (p. 205) suggests rather a peculiar explanation. It is not very easy to understand his meaning, but it seems to be as follows. He proposes to substitute "thigh-part" in the singular for the plural "thighs" in the description of the brass portion of the Image; and then, by an artificial anatomical arrangement of the juncture of the metals, he would extend the iron "legs" upwards, so as to include the lower part of the trunk of the body behind. We think that unbiassed minds will prefer the ordinary rendering as given by the combined scholarship of both the Authorised and Revised Versions, and will understand the "thighs" and the "legs" of the Image in their simple and obvious meaning.

must be a division into ten kingdoms—exactly ten, five in the Eastern Empire and five in the Western—is a mistaken one.[1]

A further mistake is sometimes met with, namely, that of supposing that the shortness of the feet compared with the length of the legs indicates that the subdivision into ten kingdoms must mean a period of short duration as compared with a long previous condition of the Roman Empire, and that it must therefore be in the future, at the end of this dispensation. But a comparison of the number of years during which each Empire has lasted shows that the length of the metal portions of the image has *no correspondence* with the duration of the Empires symbolised. *Succession*, not the length of duration, is what is signified by the several portions.

We are now in a position to understand the vision of the four Beasts in Daniel vii., to which we have before briefly alluded. The prophet says: "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven brake forth upon the great sea. And four beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." In verse 17 the angelic interpretation given of this is as follows:—"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." By comparing these two passages, we perceive that in prophetic imagery the *stormy sea* is a symbol of *the earth with the peoples upon it in a state of unrest*, or, as Keil puts it, of "the commotions amongst the nations of the world" out of which Empires or Kingdoms arise. We shall find exactly the same use of the symbol of the *sea* employed by St. John with reference to the Beast or world-empire of which he speaks in Revelation xiii. 1.

It is important to notice the prophetic or symbolic use of the word "*kings*" in this explanation given by the angel. We have previously mentioned (p. 161) that it is generally admitted—by

[1] Keil, in his Commentary on Daniel, brings out both these points very clearly. He says we are *not* to seek in the two legs of the image "any hint as to the division of the Roman kingdoms into Eastern and Western Rome." He adds, that since such divisions as the breast and two arms, and the two legs, "of necessity follow from the image being that of the human body," we must be careful not to attach any weight to such circumstances except "in so far as importance is given to it by the interpretation which is furnished in the text." (Keil on Daniel, pp. 262, 268.)

the Futurist interpreters Keil and Tregelles, as well as by all the best commentators—that in the prophetic visions of Daniel "king" often stands for "kingdom," so that, as Tregelles says, "the words are used in passages of this kind almost in an interchangeable sense." It is to be observed further that in this symbolical use of the term "king," an empire or kingdom is regarded as being represented by the ruler, or rulers, for the time being, and this throughout the whole course of its duration. Hence we see that the full idea conveyed by the word "*king*," when thus symbolically employed, is that of *a dynasty, or succession of rulers reigning over an empire or kingdom*—such dynasty or headship being regarded as collectively representing that empire or kingdom, the personal heads of the dynasty in succession being also regarded as individually representing the Empire or kingdom for the time being.

This is shown, for instance, by the words addressed to Nebuchadnezzar in the vision of the Image, "Thou, O king, . . . art the head of gold. And after *thee* [*i.e.* after the time of Babylonian dynasty of which he was then the representative] shall arise *another kingdom* inferior to thee," referring to the Medo-Persian Empire, and its dynasty of rulers, which succeeded the Babylonian. And so, in the vision of the *Beasts*, in the words we have already quoted, the angelic interpretation of the four *Beasts* is that they are "four *kings*," and immediately afterwards the fourth *Beast* is explained as being the "fourth *kingdom*" or empire—the kingdom, as Tregelles rightly says, being "regarded as headed up in its sovereign."[1]

Besides these passages from Daniel the *Speaker's Commentary* gives an apt illustration of this meaning of the word "king" from Jeremiah xxv. 11,—"These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years"—on which it remarks that the word *king* here means "Nebuchadnezzar *and his four successors*." In other words, the term means, as we have shown, a *dynasty, or headship of successive rulers in the same line over an empire or kingdom.*

We shall see presently that a right understanding of this prophetic and symbolic use of the term "king" has a most important bearing upon the application of the same term by Daniel

[1] Compare Daniel ii. 38, 39; vii. 17.

to the ten "horns" or "kingdoms" into which the fourth empire was to be divided; also to the remarkable "little horn" or *king* that was to rise into power amongst them (Dan. vii. 8) which we shall prove to be the *Papal Power*. We shall also see later on the importance of this meaning of the word when we come to "the *Beast*" of Revelation xiii. and xvii.[1]

Daniel's account of his vision of the four Beasts thus proceeds: "The first was like a lion, and had eagles' wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon two feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it" (verse 4). The lion and the eagle, chief amongst beasts and birds, correspond to the gold of the *Image*, chief among metals; and thus the first Beast, like the first portion of the metallic image, aptly symbolises the autocratic Babylonian Empire. By the wings of the eagle seem to be meant the soaring ambition and swift conquests of the Babylonian monarchy. In the further description,—that the wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon two feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it,—there seems a reference, as is very generally admitted, to the punishment inflicted on Nebuchadnezzar in the zenith of Babylonian power, as narrated in the fourth chapter of Daniel, when the wings of the outrageous pride of the monarch were clipped by the judgment of insanity visited upon him, as we read in the sixteenth verse of that

[1] Keil, Tregelles, and other Futurist writers, in order to support their theory of literal interpretation, and a future individual Antichrist, assert that when the word "king" is thus used, some one particular monarch is referred to, who is the most conspicuous king of the dynasty, or the founder of the Empire. Thus with regard to the four empires symbolised by the Four Beasts, Tregelles suggests that the four individuals are Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, and Augustus, but this is purely arbitrary, and an hypothesis for which there is no evidence. There is not the least reason, for instance, to suppose that in speaking of the fourth "king" or "kingdom," *i.e.*, the Roman Empire, the prophecy of Daniel specially designates Augustus. And, even if it were so, it would not in any way interfere with the fact clearly established from Scripture, as we have just shown, that the word "*king*," thus representatively used in prophecy, denotes *an empire, or kingdom, having a succession of rulers in the same line at the head of it*, or, in short, a *dynasty*; for the individual thus specified would *represent* the *line of kings* of which he was the most conspicuous member.

chapter: "Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him"—after which he was restored from his degraded bestial condition, "lifted up from the earth," etc., and brought to a sane appreciation of his humble position as a *man* in relation to Almighty God, as alluded to in the words, "a man's heart was given to it."

We next read: "And behold another beast, a second, like unto a bear, and it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in his mouth between his teeth: and they said unto it, Arise, devour much flesh" (verse 5). This is well explained in Bishop Ellicott's Commentary: "The second Beast corresponds to the silver portion of the Image of chapter ii. . . . The raising up on one side implies that one part of the Kingdom would come into greater prominence than the other. Such was the case in the Medo-Persian Empire, in which the Persian element surpassed the Median. . . . The three ribs have been understood from the time of Hippolytus to mean three nations subdued by it—the Babylonians, the Lydians, and the Egyptians. . . . By the command, 'Arise and devour,' the second Empire is permitted to make further conquests before its disappearance."

Next, of the third Beast, we read: "After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it" (verse 6). This third Beast corresponds to the third or brazen portion of the Image, and denotes the Grecian Empire. Swiftness, indicated by the well-known activity of the leopard, and also by the four wings of a bird, was a striking characteristic of the conquests made by that power, especially under Alexander.

The four "heads" are very often interpreted as referring to the four kingdoms into which the Grecian Empire was divided by the successors of Alexander. But this interpretation introduces confusion into prophetic symbolism, and mars the wonderful exactness and appropriateness of the meaning of these figures. "*Beasts*," in the prophetic symbolism employed by Daniel and John, mean *world-empires*. "*Heads*" seen upon a Beast denote *successive headships, i.e. forms of government, or classes of governors*, under which that Empire exists in the course of its history. A "*horn*," on the other hand, is a more general symbol with a wider mean-

ing. Like the word "*king*," which we have already explained,[1] to which, in fact, it corresponds, as shown in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, it sometimes means some one particular king; in other cases it means a kingdom, or, in a larger sense, an empire represented by a line of rulers. Hence we see that the appropriate symbol for kingdoms existing together as subordinate parts of an empire, like those of Alexander's successors, would not be "heads," but either "horns" or "kings." We shall notice later on what deep meaning and historical accuracy is brought out by observing this distinction, when we come to speak of "the Beast" in the Revelation, in which both "heads" and "horns" are seen. And we shall see that there is a yet further signification in which the more general symbol of "kings" may be used, namely, as corresponding to "heads" or successive forms of government over an empire, as when the angel interprets the seven "heads" of the Beast, in Revelation xvii., "and they are seven kings: the five are fallen," etc.

We may take it, then, that the right interpretation of the four "heads" of the third Beast is that they denote four *successive headships* over the Grecian Empire. Professor Birks explains these headships as follows: "Four distinct powers in succession prevailed in Greece. The *Athenian* empire first lasted seventy-two years. It was succeeded by the *Lacedemonian*, to which Demosthenes and Diodorus assign twenty-nine or thirty years. Then followed the *Theban* supremacy of ten years; and two years afterwards, the accession of Philip, and the commencement of the power of *Macedon*. The broad features of history would thus accord with the present emblem."[2]

We now come to the fourth Beast, that which most interested Daniel, and a right understanding of which is of the deepest interest to ourselves, seeing that we are involved in the fulfilment of the vision. We read, verse 7, "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."

[1] Page 165. [2] *First two Visions of Daniel*, p. 51.

There can be no reasonable doubt that here is portrayed the same iron rule of Rome, which was symbolised by the iron portion of the Image, and that the "ten horns" correspond to the "ten toes." These, as we have already shown, indicate the separate powers, or kingdoms, into which the Old Western Roman Empire was to become subdivided, after the Gothic invasions.[1] These separate kingdoms were still component parts of the Roman Empire, but the old headship of the Cæsars, after being removed to Constantinople, was gradually supplanted in influence by the rising Power of the Popes, a Power that began to come into prominence at Rome at this very juncture of history, as we have already shown, and shall prove yet further as we proceed.[2]

The chief interest of the vision of this fourth Beast centres round the "*Little Horn*." The previous vision of the Image, given to a heathen despot, had simply to do with the question of *political* power, which was the idol of Nebuchadnezzar's heart. It foretold to him the succession of world-empires up to the advent of the world-empire of Christ, before Whom all earthly empires and kingdoms would fall. But to Daniel, the child of God, in the vision of the fourth Beast, a revelation was given concerning that which would be of the deepest interest to God's children. To him it was given to foretell, under the mysterious symbolism of the "*Little Horn*," that in the course of the fourth or Roman world-empire there would rise to the head of it, when it would have entered upon its subdivided stage, symbolised by the ten "horns" or kingdoms, a terrible ruling power, not only *political* but also *spiritual*, that of the Antichrist. The career of this "little horn" forms the chief subject of Daniel's vision of the four Beasts. It was to spring up amongst the "ten horns" or kingdoms and attain to supremacy over them all,—"whose look was more stout than his fellows" (*v.* 20). A long line of the most able expositors from the time of the Reformation to the present day, including such names as Sir I. Newton, Bishop Newton, Bishop Wordsworth, Birks, Elliott, Guinness, etc., have shown that the Little Horn was a symbolic prediction of the rise of the *Papacy*. The Little Horn was "diverse" from the others, a

[1] See p. 160.

[2] Compare what has been said, pp. 134-147.

characteristic which obviously applies to the Papacy. As regards its actual temporal domains it has always been "little," but, for all that, its political influence has been tremendous, and its pretensions unbounded: "whose look was more stout than his fellows." In order that it might rise into eminence, it is said that before it "three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots." We have already mentioned, and shall show more fully later on, that, in the further prophecies concerning this same Power given in the New Testament, the rule of the Cæsars at Rome was the *chief* obstacle to the rise of the Papal Antichrist, but here it is revealed that three minor powers would also stand in the way. Professor Birks shows, from the pages of the historian Gibbon, how, chiefly by the schemes and instigation of the Romish Church, these three obstructing Powers, namely that of Odoacer and the Heruli, that of the Gothic kings, and that of the Lombards, were successively overthrown, and thus the way was paved for the bestowal by Pepin of the Papal states upon the Pope, who thus became a temporal sovereign.

Moreover, it is said of the Little Horn that it had a "mouth" which uttered great blasphemies: it cruelly persecuted the saints of the Most High: and it had "eyes like the eyes of a man." Of this latter characteristic Sir I. Newton well says: "By its eyes it was a *seer*," to use the expression of the Old Testament, or, as he adds, in that of the New Testament, an *episkopos*, *i.e.*, *an overseer*, or bishop. Also it claimed absolute power, and to be above all law. We have already shown how these characteristics of the Antichrist have been fulfilled in the Papacy,[1] and the proof will come out yet more fully as we further examine the New Testament prophecies on the same subject.

We may here notice that the author of *The Great Prophecies*, in common with other Futurist writers, puts forward a very mistaken argument in order to discredit the Historical view that the Little Horn upon the Fourth Beast, in Daniel vii., means the Papal Antichrist. He says: "The Church was unknown in the times of the Old Testament, being a mystery hidden from the ages, until it was revealed by the Lord and His Apostles. . . .

[1] See p. 131.

Hence those interpreters who persist in finding Popery in the Book of Daniel are mistaken, and land themselves and their disciples in hopeless confusion. What God has to say of the Church, and of its adversary the false Church, must be sought for in the New Testament." [1]

That this criticism is quite unsound and misleading can, we think, be easily shown. The Old Testament prophets, as we know from 1 Peter i. 10–12, were often commissioned to foretell things the full meaning of which they did not themselves understand. The term "mystery," alluded to above, which is applied in the New Testament to the Church, Faith, the Gospel, the Kingdom, does not mean that *absolutely nothing* was foretold about these things in the Old Testament, but that what was only darkly and mysteriously intimated before, was, in New Testament times, *clearly manifested.* The *mystery* of the Church which St. Paul alludes to, in Ephesians iii. 3–9, as being "hid from the ages," and "hid in God," was the great fact of the equal welcome by Christ of the Gentiles with the Jew. That the Gentiles were to be *equal* with Jews was indeed unknown till New Testament times. But that the Gentiles were to receive the blessings of the Gospel in this dispensation was foreshadowed in many Old Testament Scriptures.[2] To infer, therefore, as the above writer does, that because this particular detail concerning the Church was not clearly revealed in Daniel's time, therefore *nothing* was revealed about it, and that therefore God could not have commissioned the prophet to indicate *dimly* in the mysterious prediction of the Fourth Beast, or Roman Empire, that long persecution of His Church by her great enemy which was to characterise the domination of Rome during the greater part of the present dispensation, is an argument that is entirely fallacious. We should think it must be obvious to all that there *is* a revelation concerning the New Testament Church in that prophecy of Daniel vii., as, for example, in verse 18, where the angel speaks of the time when "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever." That the "saints" here spoken of are, in a very special sense, the saints of the New

[1] *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries.* Preface, page xi.

[2] See page 87, where this fallacy has been further refuted.

Testament Church, gathered both out of Jews and Gentiles, is clear from Christ's description of those who shall possess the kingdom, Matt. v. 3, Rev. iii. 21, and from many other Scriptures: and if the Church is thus alluded to in this prophecy of Daniel, why should not her great enemy, Popery, be also indicated in the same symbolic prediction? That it *is* so foretold we are endeavouring clearly to prove with cumulative evidence in the present volume, by comparing the prophecies of the same terrible Power in the New Testament.[1]

In the further and fuller revelation given to St. John in the visions of Revelation xiii. and xvii., which we are more particu-

[1] A few further remarks may be added on the usage of the word "*mystery*." Lightfoot defines its meaning in the New Testament as—(1) A truth which without special revelation would have been unknown; (2) A truth which was once hidden, but is now revealed. As to the truth having been hidden, it is clear that it may have been hidden *absolutely*, or it may have been hidden in the sense of being only *dimly* revealed before, veiled, that is to say, under symbol or obscure prophecy. We have shown above that "*mystery*" is frequently used in this latter sense in the New Testament. Dr. Handley Moule has the following excellent note upon this in his Commentary on Ephesians iii. 3, 5: "The mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men." On these words he says that before, "it was only dimly and sparingly intimated, *though certainly intimated* (cf. Acts xiii. 47; Rom. xv. 8–12). That it was in *some measure* revealed is suggested by the phrase here '*as* it is *now*,' etc." So, on Romans xvi. 25, "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest," etc., he says: "Not that salvation by Faith was a secret unheard of till the Christian Age (for see chap. iv.); but that its divine *manifestation* in the Cross, and consequent *unreserved proclamation* as the central truth of Redeeming Love, were new."

We have given a previous refutation of the above-mentioned fallacy of Futurist reasoning in connection with this term at page 88. See also Grimm's *New Testament Lexicon*, s. v., and *Lange on the Revelation*, page 107.

Some Futurist writers in support of their view tell us that the meaning of the term "mystery" is a *question of usage*, and they refer to the LXX. translation of the Book of Daniel, the only place in the Old Testament where the word is found at all, and because, in the few instances there mentioned, the term applies to that which was an *absolute* secret, they say it must *always* have that meaning. The fallacy is obvious. Of course it is a *question of usage*, but the whole point of that question is, What is the usage of New Testament writers? and according to this we have shown that the term may refer to what was *dimly* revealed before, but afterwards *clearly manifested*.

larly considering, the rise of the same baneful Power amongst the kingdoms, that was foreshadowed by the Little Horn in Daniel vii., was foretold under the symbolism both of "horns" and "heads" on the Beast—the last, or eighth "head" of the Beast rising up into supremacy over the "horns" or kingdoms just as did the Little Horn in the vision of Daniel. The *two-fold* aspect of this Power, namely, *civil* and *ecclesiastical*, which we have noticed in Daniel's vision, is presented more clearly in the visions of St. John. We have explained this already (p. 128), and shall touch on it again (p. 197, *note*).

Before we enter, however, upon the explanation of the seven "heads" seen in St. John's vision of the Beast in the Revelation, it may be interesting to notice how an example of the variations in the meaning of the symbol of "horns" or "kings," of which we have already spoken,[1] is afforded by the vision recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel. This is a later vision than that of the four Beasts, and, in accordance with the progressive method which characterises prophecy, it takes up two of those four empires (though under the symbol of a different animal in each case), in order to give some *further details* concerning them. The "*Ram*" of chapter viii., pushing in three directions, corresponds to the "*Bear*" of chapter vii. with three ribs in its mouth, and is identified by the angel in verse 20, as the Medo-Persian Empire. Whilst the "He Goat" of chapter viii., specially characterised by swiftness of movement, corresponds to the "Leopard" of chapter vii., whose wings similarly denoted swiftness, and is identified by the angel, in verse 21, as the Greek Empire which overthrew that of Medo-Persia. The Angel's words are: "The ram which thou sawest that had the two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia. [Here the word 'kings' is used in its common dynastic sense of *kingdoms*, these two kingdoms being combined in the Medo-Persian Empire symbolised by the ram.] And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece: [here 'king' is used in the still higher and more extended sense of world-empire; just as in Daniel vii. 17 it is said that the four Beasts, or world-empires, of which Greece is the third, 'are four *kings*,' each empire being regarded as represented

[1] See p. 165.

by its ruler for the time being] and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. [Here the word 'king' is generally allowed to have a special reference to Alexander the Great. But the dynastic sense must not be excluded, for his brother and son were appointed as heads of the empire, though their authority was ignored by other aspirants to office. After their death by murder, which occurred within ten or twelve years from the death of Alexander, there was a period of confusion for another ten years, and then the Greek Empire became formally divided under the rule of four dynasties, as the angel's next words show]. And as for that [horn] which was broken, in the place whereof four [horns] stood up, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation.' [1]

Elliott has the following good comment on the dynastic meaning *horn* in the closing words of the above quotation. He says: "The Angel expressly makes the four *horns* to be four *kingdoms*. Similarly the *first horn* was Alexander's *kingdom* or *dynasty*; the *two horns of the ram* were the Median and Persian *dynasties*; and the *ten horns* of Daniel's fourth wild Beast were the ten Romano-Gothic *dynasties* of Western Christendom." [2]

It needs care to discern these meanings, and the reader may think there is some obscurity and difficulty in remembering and applying such distinctions. But this is God's method in His symbolic prophecies. "Concealing while revealing" has well been said to be a marked feature in apocalyptic predictions. But the obscurity gradually vanishes as you continue to look into it. Prophecy needs careful and painstaking study; but it well repays it.

We now come to the examination of the symbolism of the "seven heads" that were seen upon the Beast of Revelation xiii. and xvii., in order that we may find out the meaning of the Beast under its *eighth head*, which is described in those two chapters.

[1] Daniel viii. 21, 22, R.V. See Appendix A for a fuller explanation of this vision, in which attention is drawn to the important point that the "Little Horn" subsequently mentioned in the vision means the *Mahometan Power*, and must not be confounded with the *Papal* "Little Horn" of chapter vii.

[2] *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iii. p. 433.

We have already mentioned, in our explanation of Revelation xii., how the Beast of the Revelation, which corresponds with the fourth Beast of Daniel, or the Roman Empire, appeared at first, as described in that chapter, in a *Dragon* form, denoting the *Pagan* rule of Rome, openly hostile to God and His people. Afterwards, in chapter xiii., the same Beast or Roman World-empire is presented in vision under *another form*, but still identified by the same important characteristic of the "seven heads and ten horns," symbolising its history. This new form, the last form of the Roman Empire, which we are proving to be the *Papal* form, was a complex one, combining the appearance of a *lion*, a *bear*, and a *leopard*, indicating that the Papal rule was to combine and exhibit in itself the striking characteristics of the previous world-empires represented in Daniel's vision by those animals, namely, the organic strength of the Babylonian Lion, the cruel greed of the Medo-Persian Bear, and the prompt, unscrupulous activity of the Grecian Leopard. Also this complex form means the wide extension of the Roman world-empire including within itself the territories of previous empires.

We have explained the meaning of the "*horns*,"[1] and have shown that according to this symbolism the time foretold for the rise of the "little horn," or Antichrist, the Beast of the Revelation, was the time when the old Roman Empire broke up under the Gothic invasions, and when the separate kingdoms of Europe became developed, the very time when the Papacy began to rise into supreme power. Let us now pass on to the meaning of the *heads*, and we shall see that the same truth, concerning *the time of the rise of Antichrist*, was prophetically revealed under this symbolism also.

We will first quote from the third paragraph of the *Abstract*, to which we have already frequently referred, and which gives the interpretation of the heads from the *Futurist* point of view. We will next endeavour to point out the error of that explanation, and then give what we believe to be the true interpretation according to the *Historical* system.

The third paragraph of the *Abstract* says: "The Beast clearly denotes the world-power [it would save confusion to keep to the

[1] See p. 165.

definition of *a world-empire*], and while presented in the Revelation in the time of the fourth Beast of Daniel, it also bears some likeness to each of Daniel's former Beasts—the Leopard, the Bear, and the Lion. [We are showing that the Beast of the Revelation *is* the fourth Beast of Daniel, in its last form. See p. 100.] The seven heads of the Beast are declared to be seven kings. The words 'kings' and 'kingdoms' appear to be used interchangeably in Daniel vii. 17 and 23. There have been seven universal God-opposed monarchies. Five had fallen before John's time. These were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. One, viz. Rome, the sixth, was holding sway when John prophesied, and one more, viz. the Germanic-Slavonic Empire, had not then come, but followed in its beast-like state, that is, its God-opposed state, only for a short time. The deadly wound was the national acceptance of Christianity under Constantine. As the eighth head is of the seven, may we not look for a restoration of the old Pagan power under the leadership of the personal Antichrist?"

The first thing to be noticed in the above vague and erroneous view is a mistake which throws everything into confusion, namely, the common error of interpreting the seven heads on the Beast as denoting seven successive world-empires,—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Germanic-Slavonic Empire.

We have already seen that a *Beast*, not a *head*, is the appropriate symbol for a *world-empire*, and that the Beast of the Revelation, including in its figuration the previous three Beasts of Daniel, the Lion, Bear, and Leopard, is a further development and more detailed prophecy concerning Daniel's *fourth* Beast, or Roman Empire. Now both Daniel and John use the symbol of a Beast as denoting a world-empire either *present* or *future to them*. Neither the world-empire of Egypt nor Assyria has any place in these prophecies. Their career as world-empires was already past, even when Daniel wrote, and much more in the time of John. To go back to these in order to explain the seven heads mentioned by St. John in his development of Daniel's fourth Beast is an illogical proceeding which only leads to confusion. A comparison of the usage elsewhere shows that the symbolism both of *heads* and *horns* relates to the Beast *on which they are seen*, and to no other. No one supposes that the *four heads* on the third

Beast of Daniel refer to the time of any other Beast, or world-empire, than that of *Greece*, on which they appear. Similarly the *seven heads*, as well as the *ten horns*, which St. John saw in his developed prophecy of the fourth or Roman Beast, *relate to that Roman Beast, and not to any previous Beasts.* It would be quite out of analogy for the *heads* carried by any particular Beast to be taken as representing other Beasts or world-empires. A Beast carries *its own* history figured upon it, and in order to foretell the details of that history, the symbolism of both *heads* and *horns* is employed in these symbolic prophecies.

Besides, if, according to the view in the paragraph of the *Abstract*, a Germanic-Slavonic Empire set up by the hordes of barbarians from the north who overthrew the old Roman Empire, is the seventh head, and received its death stroke at the time of the national acceptance of Christianity under Constantine, and if the eighth head is to be the seventh revived as a future Antichrist, where are we now? Are we to be told that for more than twelve centuries the Roman Empire has been in a state of suspended animation? How can Daniel's fourth, or Roman Empire, be said to last right up to the coming of Christ, as shown both by the vision of the Image and of the Beasts, if for more than twelve centuries its animation has been suspended? The idea becomes all the more unreasonable when we reflect that during all these centuries there *has* been a *Papal* Roman Imperial rule, not in suspended animation, but in baleful activity, and corresponding in all its characteristics to the eighth headship of the Roman Empire, the Beast of this passage of the Revelation.

Further, it is an illogical arrangement to put down this Germanic-Slavonic Empire in a list of distinct world-empires, like Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, seeing that such a Germano-Slavonic Empire, as is the case with the Papal Empire, can only be regarded as a form of the *Roman* Empire, and not as distinct from it; or else, since the Roman Empire is to last till Christ comes, there would be two world-empires existing at the same time, which is impossible.

Moreover, such a classification would also be illogical for this further reason, because, if the *seven* heads represent dynasties

like Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, etc., lasting over long periods, it is out of all analogy and proportion to take the *eighth* head as referring, not to a dynasty, but to a single individual, whose empire rule is to last only a few years.[1]

On every ground, then, it seems clear that the above-mentioned list of empires, or any other list of empires (for several have been put forward), is an entirely wrong interpretation of the heads upon the Beast; and that the true interpretation of those heads must be sought in the history of *the Beast itself* on which they appear; that is to say, in the history of the fourth Beast or Roman world-empire.

Is there anything, then, in the history of the Roman Empire which corresponds to these heads? We shall find exact correspondence both in this and all the other details of the Beast which St. John saw in vision. And it will be proved that this Beast symbolised the *Papal* form of the Roman Empire; in other words, the Antichrist of prophecy.

The meaning of the symbol of a "head" seems obvious. The head *governs* the body. So, therefore, a head upon a symbolic Beast in prophecy represents the *governmental power* over that

[1] Strangely enough, although the comments of Alford again and again tend to establish the identification of the Beast with the Papal system, yet on this point of the seven heads of the Beast he allows himself to adopt the classification of Auberlen, *i.e.*, he regards Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Pagan Rome, as the first six, and takes the seventh head to mean the Christian Empire beginning with Constantine, and the eighth to be a future Antichrist. This is open to all the objections mentioned above, and confounds together the headship of the Christian Cæsars and that of the Popes as one headship, during whose time, *i.e.*, for more than fifteen centuries, the Beast, which he takes to mean a power *openly* opposed to God, has been in a state of suspended animation. This interpretation, as Elliott well remarks, is self-confuting. See *Hor. Apoc.*, iii. p. 114, 5th ed.

Some, in their interpretation of the heads, have put forward as the seventh head what is called by the Frankish title of *the Holy Roman Empire*, which first came into existence under Charlemagne in the year 800. But this has no claim to any place in the prophecy at all. As Professor Bryce, the historian of The Holy Roman Empire, points out, it was more titular than anything else. It never could be regarded as a powerful world-empire like that of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and of the Roman Cæsars and of the Popes. It never exhibited the foretold characteristics of the Fourth Beast. Moreover, it passed away in 1806, whereas the Fourth Beast or Roman world-empire continues up to the second coming of Christ.

Beast or Empire. And so in the case of *several heads* upon a Beast which are successively in power, we naturally have a symbol of *several forms of government* that have successively appeared at the head of that Empire. Hence the seven heads on the Beast in Revelation xiii. mean, as Bishop Wordsworth and Elliott have shown, *seven successive forms of government over the Roman Empire*, one of which is described, in verse 3, as having received a deadly wound, and as having been revived again, so as to rise once more into power, and in this new form it is afterwards called the eighth head—the final head of the Beast, which we are considering.

In the more developed prophecy of the Beast in Revelation xvii. we have further details given to enable us to identify this last headship. The unfaithful woman there described is admitted both by Futurist and Historical interpreters to symbolise the apostate Church of Rome. She is the opposite of the woman of chapter xii., who symbolised the visible Church of Truth (see page 118). She sits upon the Beast, (verse 3,) for the Papal Church is supported by the Papal imperial power; and, as that power extends over many nations, she is also said (verses 1, 15) to sit upon "many waters." The angel further says (verse 9), "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." and explains (verse 18) that this refers to *Rome*:—"The woman which thou sawest is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth"—just as we speak of the Romish Church, by the name of the city, as "Rome." The seven-hilled city was the well-known appellation of Rome in St. John's time, and has since clung to it. The angel, therefore, here gives a *local* meaning to the "heads," which ties them to the city of Rome. This is an important point as observed by Elliott and others, for it excludes the idea of the "heads" referring to Egypt, Assyria, and other empires, and so confirms what we have already said on this point.[1]

It is interesting here again to notice how the voice of Rome

[1] Alford aptly quotes the line of the Latin poet Propertius: "The city on seven hills that ruleth all the world." He falls into confusion, however, as we have already pointed out, about the further meaning of the "heads," by adopting the interpretation that refers them to Egypt, Assyria, etc., which we have shown to be erroneous.

has shown that these prophecies have received their fulfilment in herself. Cardinal Bellarmine says, "St. John in the Apocalypse calls Rome *Babylon*; for *no other* city besides Rome reigned in his age over the kings of the earth, and it is well known that Rome was seated upon *seven hills*."[1] So in a modern well-known Romish newspaper, *The Universe*, of May 17, 1890, we find this statement: "There must be a Roman Question as long as two hundred millions of Catholics turn their eyes lovingly towards the *Seven-hilled City*, there to receive the teaching of doctrine and authority."

But besides this *local* allusion, the angel further gives a *governmental* meaning as being also intended by the symbol of the "heads," and this in connection with the city of Rome, as already explained. For this purpose he borrows the symbolical term "kings" from Daniel's prophecies, where *horns*, *heads*, and *kings* had all been used in a figurative governmental sense, and says further of the seven *heads* on the Beast, "and they are seven *kings*" (Rev. xvii. 10, R.V.).

We have previously shown that besides the *individual* meaning of "kings" in Daniel, the expression also means, as admitted even by Futurists, *kingdoms, or governments, or empires.* That is to say, the kingdom or government is regarded as being *represented* in the persons of the kings or governors who are at the head of it for the time being, according to the use of individual language previously explained in these pages.[2] Hence, as the interpreting angel said to Daniel (chap. vii. 17) concerning the four *successive* Beasts, or forms of supreme government over the world, "These great beasts, which are four, are four *kings*, which shall arise out of the earth," so also the angel here, wishing to indicate that the seven heads, which were seen upon the Roman Beast, besides their local meaning of the seven hills, were also intended to represent seven *successive* forms of supreme government over that particular Beast, said "and they are seven kings."[3]

[1] Quoted by Wordsworth, *Union with Rome*, p. 15. He also cites the Romish writers, Cardinal Baronius and the French prelate, Bossuet, to the same effect.

[2] See page 101.

[3] We have previously pointed out that the symbolic term "kings" has

That this is the meaning of the "heads" has been maintained by a number of the ablest expositors, such as Mede, Bishop Newton, Bishop Wordsworth, Elliott, Grattan Guinness, and others. Thus Bishop Wordsworth says: "Let us allow that *kings* are here used for *forms of government*, as is common in Scripture prophecy (Dan. vii. 17, 23, 24. See the LXX., and Louth on Hosea vii. 3). Then the eight heads are the eight successive forms of government in the city of Rome.[1]

The angel further defines the "heads" as follows:—"The five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while" (verse 10).

No one has shown more learning and research in discovering the meaning of these successive heads or forms of government over the Roman Empire than Elliott, who explains them as follows:—The first five constitutional ruling heads of the Roman City and Commonwealth are enumerated by the Roman historians, Livy and Tacitus, the latter a contemporary of St. John. They are (1) Kings; (2) Consuls; (3) Dictators; (4) Decemvirs; (5) Military Tribunes. These five headships, or governments, had all passed away in St. John's time, and so the angel said "the five are fallen,"—the very word we use for a change of ministry or government.[2] The sixth headship was that of the *stephanos*-crowned emperors, *i.e.*, those wearing the ordinary laurel crown of the Cæsars, which was the form of Government existing in St. John's time, and hence is spoken of by the angel as "the one is." The seventh headship, or form of supreme rule, is said

various shades of meaning in prophecy, in order to suit the requirements of the case. Thus in this 17th chapter of Revelation, which we are considering, in verse 10, the "kings" are clearly *successive*, and denote *forms of government over the empire*, as explained above; while in verse 12 the "kings" are *contemporaneous*, and denote the *separate kingdoms of Europe* into which the Empire became subdivided, as we have already briefly explained, p. 160. For variations in meaning of "kings" see page 174.

[1] *Union with Rome*, p. 35.

[2] Alford finds a needless difficulty in the word "fallen," as if it could not be used in such a case; but the Greek word is shown, in Grimm's *New Testament Lexicon*, to possess the meaning of *coming to an end, ceasing, disappearing*; and it is therefore obvious and appropriate that, in a prophetic vision, where a head symbolises a form of government, the cessation of that form should be indicated by the head being said to *fall*, that is, to cease to be in power.

by the angel to be "not yet come" in St. John's time. It means the *diadem*-crowned emperors. This was a distinct form of headship, as can be proved from Gibbon, the *diadem* being the badge of *despotic power*, and absolute Asiatic sovereignty. It began with Diocletian. Gibbon says: "Diocletian *assumes the diadem*, and introduces *Persian* ceremonial. *New form of administration*"; and again: "Like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as the founder of a new empire."[1]

In order to understand the fall of this seventh head and the rise of the eighth, it is necessary to compare the previous description in chapter xiii. with that of chapter xvii. In chapter xiii. we read: "And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death [we see, from verses 12, 14, that it appeared to St. John with a scar as by a 'stroke of the sword'] and his death stroke was healed, and the whole earth wondered after the Beast" (verse 3, R.V.). That is to say, the Beast, or world-empire of Rome, in the form in which St. John saw it, in chapters xiii. and xvii., was governed by this revived head, called an eighth, which attained to remarkable power and ascendancy over mankind.

If we turn to history, we obtain light on this description. The despotic emperorship, or seventh headship at Rome (for it must always be remembered, as already explained, that the symbolism of the "heads" is tied to the city of Rome), continued for a little while, as the angel said it would,[2] and then it received a

[1] The objection made by some expositors, that John could have known nothing of these historical distinctions of forms of government in Rome, has no force at all. There is not the slightest reason for supposing that John understood all the details of the prophetic visions which he records, any more than that the Old Testament prophets knew the full meaning of the predictions concerning the Messiah which they were commissioned to utter. It is enough that God knew.

We may notice here a further minute detail of the symbolism of the heads and horns. In chapter xii., where the Dragon or Pagan form of the Roman Empire is symbolised, the seven *heads* were seen as crowned, because the Pagan headships were then running their course of imperial rule, but the ten *horns* were not said to be crowned because they had not yet come into power. But in chapter xiii., where the career of the Papal Beast, or last form of Roman world-empire, is described, crowns are seen on the ten *horns*, because they were in power during that period.

[2] Chapter xvii. 10. Alford would lay the stress on "*continue*" rather

deadly wound. Diocletian, with whom, as we have said, the seventh headship began, ascended the imperial throne in A.D. 284. Gibbon, speaking of his triumph in 303, says: "It was the last triumph Rome ever beheld. Soon after this the emperors ceased to vanquish, and *Rome ceased to be the capital of the Empire.*" In the year 330 Constantine removed the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium, hence called Constantinople. After this the seventh head, or despotic emperorship, no longer existed in the city of Rome. Those who held rule over the Western portion of the Empire made their capital first at Milan, then at Ravenna; till at length, under the repeated invasions of the Goths, the downfall of the Western Empire was completed by the deposition of Romulus Augustulus in 476.

Thus it was that the seventh head, the despotic rule of the Cæsars at Rome, became "smitten unto death," and remained in that condition until it was "healed," or revived again, in the despotic rule of the Popes of Rome, as we shall presently show.

We can now see clearly the meaning of the description of the eighth head in chapter xvii. 11: "And the beast that was, and is not, *is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven*"; that is to say, it is the seventh head revived in a new form so as to be called an eighth.[1] The Beast under this new head,—in other words, this new and last form of the Roman world-empire,—was the Beast which St. John saw, and the further words, "he goeth into perdition," refer to its ultimate destruction by Christ when He comes to set up His own world-empire. We can also see the meaning of the enigmatical description "was, and is not, and shall come," three times repeated with slight modification, in verses 8, 11. The "*was*" refers to the despotic imperial rule in the form in which it *previously existed*, *i.e.* as the seventh head, or despotic rule of the Cæsars in Rome; the "*is not*" refers to

than on the "*little while.*" In either case the expression presents no difficulty. If stress is laid on the "little while," it is in contrast to the Beast's long reign.

[1] The phrase "is of the seven" means "the successor and result of the seven, following and springing out of them" (*Alford*). It denotes one of the same class, or, as Elliott explains it, "one similar in spirit and character with the seven previous heads," exercising his arbitrary will in the same unscrupulous way. For a similar use of the preposition "of," see 1 John ii. 19; 2 Timothy iii. 6.

the time when this seventh headship was *no longer existing* in Rome; the "*shall come*" refers to the time when the despotic rule of the seventh head would once more be *revived* in Rome in a new form, namely, that of the *Papal Imperial rule.*

But there are two aspects of the dominion of Rome. It is a *spiritual* as well as a *political* Power; and accordingly the symbolism of the fall of the seventh head and its revival in the eighth is regarded by Elliott, and others, as also referring to the fact that the seventh headship, begun by Diocletian, was a *professedly Pagan* headship. This head was smitten by the victories of the Christian emperor Constantine, and the extinction was afterwards completed by Theodosius, of whom Gibbon says: "The last edict of Theodosius inflicted a *deadly wound* on the superstition of the Pagans." Thus the professedly Pagan headship of Rome was smitten unto death, and so remained till the spirit of it became once more revived there in the despotic, persecuting rule of the professedly Christian headship of the Papacy. For, (as Alford well remarks in his comments on the second Beast,) the "so-called Christian priesthood" of the "so-called Christian Roman Empire" are "the veritable inheritors of Pagan rites, images, and superstitions; actually the continuators, under a different name, of the same worship in the same places; that of the Virgin for that of Venus, Cosmas and Damian for Romulus and Remus, the image of Peter for that of Jupiter Tonans."

Let us pause here for a moment in order to contrast a common Futurist explanation of the "heads," based upon their system of literal and individual interpretation. According to this system the seven heads or kings are held to be seven individual Roman Emperors. The eighth head is the supernatural individual Antichrist whom they expect in the future. He is to be the soul of one of those seven emperors, presumably Nero, which, after having remained in Hades ever since that time, is to be raised from the dead, and re-incarnated in some man, a Napoleon being suggested as a probable receptacle! Thus they take the enigmatical description "was, is not, and shall come" to mean that the "*was*" refers to this emperor's existence previous to St.

John's time, the "is not" to mean that he had passed out of existence in St. John's time, slain by the stroke of a sword, and the "shall come" to refer to this monstrous future incarnation in some individual.[1]

They support this theory by remarking that the Beast in this passage of the Revelation, chapter xvii. 8, as also in xi. 7, is said to come up "out of the abyss." This detail, however, is quite against the idea of the Beast being the incarnation of any departed human spirit. The "abyss" as spoken of in the Revelation, and also in Luke viii. 31, where the devils entreat the Lord Jesus "that He would not command them to depart into the abyss" (R.V.), means the proper home of Satan and his angels. It is a different locality from *Hades*, which is the New Testament expression to denote the abode of departed souls of men. This is well shown in an Excursus on Hades by Dr. Craven in Lange's Commentary on the Revelation, and is also pointed out by Alford.[2] Therefore the idea that the Beast under its eighth head, coming up "out of the abyss," means the soul of Nero, or any one else, reincorporated in the person of some future individual Antichrist, is not only utterly improbable, but is excluded by the terms employed. For since neither the soul of Nero, nor that of any one else, is in "the abyss" spoken of in the Revelation, but in Hades, it cannot possibly come up "out of the abyss."

We have already explained the origin of the Papal Beast, described, in Revelation xiii. 1, as "coming up out of the sea." [3] When it is said to come up "out of the abyss," the origin is only carried back one stage further, and that which has been well called the masterpiece of Satan for working havoc in Christ's

[1] These views are gathered from *Dr. Seiss on the Revelation*, p. 406, and from the author of *The Great Prophecies*, p. 86. See an extract from the latter writer already quoted at page 54.

[2] The only exception is Romans x. 6, where St. Paul adapts a saying of Moses to express Gospel truth. Moses said: "Who shall go over the sea for us?" (Deut. xxx. 13, R.V.). St. Paul changes the expression for "sea," and uses for it the word "abyss," meaning "the deep," and so applies it figuratively to the place of the dead, instead of the ordinary expression Hades.

[3] See page 126.

Church is represented as having its prime source in the proper home of Satan, "the abyss."

Again we leave it to our readers to decide which of these systems of interpretation is most consistent with sober reason and sound judgment.

We now propose to show, further, from the combined evidence of St. Paul, of the early Christian Church, of historians, and of the Popes themselves, that the rising up of the despotic imperial Power of the Popes of Rome was the resuscitation of the seventh head, or despotic Power of the Cæsars, foretold in this symbolic vision. Thus we shall confirm what has been shown from the symbolism of Rev. xiii. and xvii. as to the *time* of the appearance of the eighth head of the Beast, proving that the Papacy is that Power, or, in other words, is the Antichrist of prophecy.

We have already mentioned, in our explanation of the use of *individual language*, that the imperial rule of the Cæsars at Rome was the "*hindrance*" about which St. Paul said to the Thessalonians that they *knew* what it was, and that when it should be removed out of the way the Antichrist would spring up in its place.[1] Now the *proof* that this "*hindrance*" referred to the Cæsars is as follows. The early Christian Churches were in more or less close communication with each other over the Roman Empire; and Thessalonica, placed on the great Roman road, the Via Egnatia, and being, moreover, an important emporium of trade by sea, was, as pointed out in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, "an invaluable centre for the spread of the Gospel." Now St. Paul had told the Thessalonians plainly, by word of mouth, what the hindrance was which kept back the manifestation of the Antichrist. Accordingly in his letter to them he says: "Ye *know* that which restraineth," and which would continue to do so until "taken out of the way." From this centre, therefore, the information must have spread. What the Thessalonians knew well about the *hindrance* that checked the manifestation of the Antichrist must have been perfectly well known to Christians generally throughout the Empire. More-

[1] 2 Thessalonians ii. 6. We would ask our readers to refer to what has been said at page 103 on this point.

over, a matter of such deep interest could not be easily forgotten.

Now we find this important fact, that all the earliest Fathers, for several centuries after the apostolic age, who allude to the subject at all, agree in the interpretation that the *hindrance*, mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians, was *the existing Roman Empire under the Cæsars*. *Irenæus* briefly implies it. *Tertullian*, who wrote nearly at the same time, only about a century after the apostolic age, shows very clearly that this was the recognised meaning of St. Paul's words amongst the Christians of that age. Commenting on 2 Thessalonians ii. 7—"only there is one that restraineth now until he be taken out of the way" (R.V.)—Tertullian says: "Who is this but the estate of Rome? the breaking up and dispersion of which into ten kings [or kingdoms] shall bring in Antichrist."[1] Similarly, in his *Apology for Christianity* presented to the Roman Emperor, he says: "We Christians know that a tremendous power ready to come upon the whole world . . . is kept in check by the Roman Empire."[2] and thus, as Robertson tells us in his *Church History*, Tertullian, whom he describes as one of the most eminent of the early Fathers, refutes the charge of disloyalty that had been made against the Christians, by appealing to the fact that *the Christian Church in general, all over the world at that time, regarded the then existing Roman Empire of the Cæsars as the obstacle of which St. Paul had spoken as "letting" or "hindering" the appearance of Antichrist upon the scene of the world.*

The same interpretation of the meaning of St. Paul's words continued to be held by the Fathers who followed in after centuries, Chrysostom, Cyril, the Pseudo-Ambrose, and Jerome. Both Chrysostom and Jerome point out that the obvious reason why St. Paul did not more explicitly name the Roman Empire under the Cæsars as being the *hindrance* that had to be removed out of the way, was the fear of stirring up persecution against the then infant Church; since the emperors would have been sure to resent the idea that their rule at Rome would ever be disturbed.

As to the idea of the *Holy Spirit* being the *hindrance* that had to be taken out of the way before Antichrist could be manifested,—an idea frequently put forward by Futurists and others at the

[1] *De resurr.* c., ch. xxiv. [2] *Apology*, ch. xxxii.

present day,—we find no mention of it till the time of Chrysostom in the latter half of the fourth century, and of Theodoret in the first half of the fifth century, and *both of them reject the interpretation.* Theodoret pronounces it "impossible." Chrysostom's comment on this point is interesting, and is as follows:—"What, then, is it *that withholdeth*, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some say the grace of the Spirit, others the Roman Empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly. . . . But because he says this of the Roman Empire, he naturally only glanced at it, and spoke covertly. For he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities and useless dangers. For if he had said that after a little while the Roman Empire would be dissolved, they would now immediately have even overwhelmed him as a pestilent person." [1]

Equally striking and convincing on this point are the words of warning uttered a little later by Jerome, at the beginning of the fifth century, when the Gauls had begun their invasions and the era had set in which was to result in the crisis of the fall of the old Roman Empire, and of the rule of the Cæsars in Rome. In a letter written at this time Jerome refers to St. Paul's prophecy about the *hindrance* that had to be removed, and shows that the crisis which had been foretold for the appearance of the Antichrist on the scene of the world was then at hand. He says: "*He who withheld* is being taken out of the way [referring to the threatened fall of the *Roman Empire* under the invasions of the Goths], and yet we do not perceive that Antichrist is at the door." [2]

Futurist writers are sorely perplexed by the strong evidence of this point, which, after all, is only one of many that completely show the erroneous foundations on which their system rests. Thus the author of *The Great Prophecies*, in a recent discussion on this passage of Thessalonians, adopts the theory of the Holy Spirit being the "hindrance," a theory which, as we

[1] Chrysostom, Homily on 2 Thessalonians ii. 6-9.

[2] *Ep. ad Ageruch.* 91. This passage has been previously quoted, p. 103, to illustrate the use of individual language employed in prophecy to denote a system or dynasty.

have seen, is completely swept away by the considerations brought forward by the early Fathers mentioned above. His attempt to substantiate this theory by the brief statement in Genesis vi. 3—"My spirit shall not always strive with man,"—entirely fails. The fact that God announced to Noah that there should only be 120 years' respite, during which His Spirit and the preaching of Noah should continue to plead with that rebellious generation, and that then judgment should fall, cannot possibly be taken to prove that His Holy Spirit is going to be "taken out of the way" during the closing years of this dispensation. The further argument of the above writer shows still more clearly the weakness of his cause. Unable to get over the evidence of Tertullian, as a last resort he says: "Long before the time of Tertullian heresies had sprung up on every side. . . . Tertullian himself teaches many things that cannot be defended from the New Testament,"—as if this could be the slightest reason why that eminent man should not be accepted as a credible witness to a matter of fact and of common observation amongst Christians in his day, and with regard to which he would have stultified himself if his assertion had not been true. Moreover, ignoring the testimony of the other Fathers we have mentioned, this writer adds the extraordinary assumption that Tertullian "was evidently the discoverer of his interpretation!" Apparently he forgets that it is not merely Tertullian's interpretation that he is confronted with, but with the evidence which Tertullian affords that *the Christians of his day so interpreted it.* Such are the shifts to which Futurists are driven in support of their system. The above criticism of Tertullian and his writings reminds one of a humorous legal maxim to this effect: "If the evidence brought against you is too much for you, then abuse the attorney who brings it."

We would submit, therefore, that we may take it as established upon the evidence of St. Paul, as interpreted by the whole Christian Church of the earliest ages, that the "hindrance," which had to be removed out of the way before the Antichrist could be manifested, was *the Power of the Cæsars ruling at Rome*, and that when that power should be removed the appearance of the Antichrist might be looked for.[1]

[1] Another explanation of the "hindrance" that was to be removed has

Now let us turn to history, and see whether any great and blasphemously self-exalting Power, antagonistic to the cause of Christ, and working havoc in His Church, as was foretold of the Antichrist, did begin to be manifested at Rome after the Power of the Cæsars had been taken out of the way.

Professor Bryce, the historian of *The Holy Roman Empire*, speaking of the rise of the Papacy, tells us that "the extinction of the Western Empire emancipated the ecclesiastical potentate from secular control"; in other words, the Emperors ruling at Rome constituted the *hindrance* that had to be removed before the Papal Power could be developed.[1]

The monk Damian, a friend of Hildebrand, puts these words into the mouth of Jesus Christ as addressed to the Pope: "The king of Rome being *taken out of the way*, I have given to thee the whole Roman Empire thus vacated."[2] Here we have the very same idea, and expressed in the same phraseology, as that of the prophecy by St. Paul.

Not less remarkable is the evidence of Cardinal Manning, confirming the identification of the Papacy with the Antichrist foretold by St. Paul in this passage. He writes: "The conversion of the Empire to Christianity, and then *its removal into the far East, freed the Vicar of Christ from temporal subjection, and then*

been put forward by some, namely, that "*law*" is meant, or as it is more vaguely expressed by Alford and others, "the influence of political states" or "the fabric of human polity." But there is not a tittle of evidence in support of this hypothesis. And it seems to be only put forward for want of something better, by those who are unwilling to recognise the Papacy as the Antichrist. Moreover, it is refuted by two considerations. In the first place, if this were the "hindrance," there is no reason why St. Paul should not have said so plainly in his letter, whereas the interpretation we have given as the true one perfectly explains his reticence. And secondly, it is refuted by the obvious relation between the *one who restraineth* and the *one who opposeth*, the latter of whom was to be revealed after the former should be removed out of the way. In each case the prophecy clearly refers to a power headed up and manifested in some conspicuous person in the world, who is recognised as its embodiment and representative. We have shown that this applies to the Emperor and to the Pope of Rome respectively. But neither "*law*," nor the "*fabric of human polity*," nor the "influence of political states," has any such representative in the world.

[1] See *Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 42–44.

[2] Elliott, *Hor. Apoc.*, iii. 173.

by the action of the same providence he was clothed with the prerogatives of a true and proper legal sovereignty." The Cardinal adds the following blasphemous claim for the Pope, showing still further that the "Vicar of Christ," who at the above-mentioned crisis of history began to assume sovereignty, is none other than the Antichrist who, as St. Paul foretold, would then rise up and lay claim to Divine prerogatives :—"In the person of Pius IX., Jesus reigns on earth, and 'He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.'"[1]

Again, Cardinal Manning says elsewhere: "The possession of the Pontiffs commences with the abandonment of Rome by the Emperors. . . . No sovereign has ever reigned in Rome since, except the Vicar of Jesus Christ." Thus abundant is the evidence, even of Rome herself, that the Papacy rose into power at the very time when the words of St. Paul show that the Man of Sin was to appear, namely, when the "hindrance" of the Cæsars was removed.

Nay more, we have the testimony of the Pope himself, and out of his own mouth he is shown to be the *Antichrist* that was to be revealed after the *hindrance* should be taken out of the way. The following remarkable words appeared in the *Times* of July 27, 1887, being part of a letter from the present Pope Leo XIII. to Cardinal Rampolla :—"When Constantine the Great decided to transfer to the East the seat of the Roman Empire, it may be held as founded in truth that the hand of Providence had guided him, in order that so might be accomplished the new destiny of the Rome of the Popes." What plainer explanation could we wish of the "hindrance," mentioned in 2 Thessalonians ii., that had to be removed before Antichrist could be manifested? Pope Leo himself here tells us it was the *Cæsars* ruling at Rome that constituted the hindrance to the manifestation of the rule of the *Popes* at Rome, and that when the restraining presence of the Cæsar was taken away, the power of the Pope began to develop.

So, too, the description of the Beast under its eighth head, in the prophecy of Revelation which we are more especially considering, can be identified as being the Papal Power by Papal utterances as well as by the evidence of history. We have

[1] Quoted by Dr. Guinness, *Light for the Last Days*, p. 99.

already explained that the eighth head was the resuscitation of the seventh head, or despotic headship of the Cæsars. Professor Bryce tells us how, after the Cæsars had ceased to rule at Rome, the Papacy gradually perfected a scheme which made its own power to be "*the exact counterpart of the departed despotism.*" In other words, the Papacy was the despotic headship of the Cæsars *revived in a new form.*[1]

Mr. Lecky, author of *The History of Rationalism*, speaking of the development of the Papacy, says: "It is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."[2]

Professor Bryce further tells us how Boniface VIII. showed himself to the crowding pilgrims at the jubilee of 1300, seated on the throne of Constantine, arrayed with sword and crown and sceptre, shouting aloud, "I am Cæsar. I am Emperor!" What better explanation could we wish of the seventh head of the Roman Empire revived in the eighth, that final headship which still exists, though in a shorn condition, the only form of Roman Empire now in the world, the only power which makes any pretension to universal authority, and which must continue to exist till it is completely overthrown by Christ at His second coming?[3]

And since we have shown that the Power thus revived, which sprung up at Rome at the very crisis foretold, namely, after the "*hindrance*" of the Cæsars was removed, exhibits all the many marks and minute details of the Antichrist as foreshadowed by Daniel, Paul and John, who are admitted to be the special prophets concerning this great power of evil that was to arise in the world, it is hard to see how the force of this combined

[1] As a further illustration of this point we may add that, in a paper contributed to the *Contemporary Review*, Father Hyacinthe, formerly a Romish priest and celebrated preacher at *Nôtre Dame*, but whose eyes have since been opened to see the Papacy in its true light, says that "the worst of *Cæsarisms* is that of the *Pope*" (*Cont. Rev.* for July, 1893). See p. 528.

[2] The *Forum*, June, 1890. On the Futurist fallacy based upon the old Germanic title of the Holy Roman Empire. See page 179, note.

[3] As a further confirmation of this point compare the inscription on the triumphal arch erected at the accession of Pope Alexander VI., which we have previously quoted, p. 132 "Rome was great under Cæsar, but now she is greatest. Alexander VI. *reigns*. Cæsar was a man. Alexander is a god."

evidence, proving that the Papacy is *the* Antichrist of prophecy, can be resisted by any unprejudiced mind.

It is now necessary to notice a remarkable passage in Revelation xvii. 16, which is referred to in the *Abstract*, from which we have previously quoted,—a passage which is constantly brought forward with the greatest positiveness as if it disproved the truth of the Historical interpretation that the prophecies of the Antichrist are fulfilled in the Papacy. In this passage a change of attitude towards the Harlot, or corrupt Church of Rome, by the once subservient kingdoms is foretold. The Revised Version reads: "And the ten horns which thou sawest *and* the beast, these shall hate the harlot, etc."; whereas the reading of the Authorised Version is: "And the ten horns which thou sawest *upon* the beast, these shall hate the harlot, etc.," ignoring any action of the Beast in the matter. The former reading of "*and* the beast" seems at first sight to imply, though as we shall show, it need not necessarily be so understood, that the horns or kingdoms, and also the Beast, both co-operate in the destruction of the Harlot; whereas the latter reading "*upon* the beast" assigns the action of destruction to the *horns alone.*

Doubtful readings and mysterious passages are ever a stronghold for erroneous theories. Accordingly Futurist interpreters endeavour to make much of this passage. They adopt the former reading of "*and* the beast" as if it were a matter quite beyond dispute or doubt, and they argue from it that, since it is agreed that the Harlot means the corrupt Church of Rome, the Beast cannot mean the Papal Imperial Power, because in that case, according to this prophecy, the Pope would have to assist in the spoliation of the Romish Church, which is absurd.

On this we may remark, in the first place, that it is obviously unwise to build a theory, or raise an objection, upon a reading of disputed authority. Secondly, although the Sinaitic MS., which is largely relied upon in our Revised Version, reads "*and* the beast," yet, as Elliott has shown, Tertullian, who wrote *about two centuries earlier* than the date of that MS., and only one hundred years from St. John's time, seems clearly to have had before him MSS. with the reading "*upon* the beast," since he speaks of the

spoliation of the Harlot as being effected by the "*kings*," and does not include the Beast in the action. Moreover, the reading "*upon* the beast" is supported by many copies of the Vulgate, which, as is well known, was an early translation from the most ancient MSS. which had preceded it. Since, therefore, the reading "*and* the beast," upon which Futurists rely, is a *disputed* reading, with considerable evidence against it, and since no one can assert that the other reading might not *possibly* be the true one, the ground is cut from under the attempted *reductio ad absurdum*, so often dogmatically brought forward, that Historicists are convicted by this passage of making out that the Pope will destroy the Romish Church.[1]

But, further than this, the common-sense acceptation of the context is clearly in favour of the reading "upon the beast," not "and the beast." It proves, as any one may see who will read the passage for himself, that the words "*these* shall hate the whore, etc.," mean that the action is that of the horns only, and not of the Beast, since in the following verses it is further said of the same "these" that God "did put in their hearts . . . to give their kingdom unto the beast," where it is self-evident that it must be the horns, and not the Beast, which are spoken of as giving their kingdom to the Beast.

Bishop Wordsworth, in his excellent pamphlet entitled *Union with Rome* (p. 99), shows how this prophecy, given in vivid figurative language, of a change of attitude that would come over

[1] The passage of Tertullian above alluded to is as follows. Speaking of the order of the events of the end, he says that, "First the harlot city [*i.e.*, the mystic Babylon or Romish Church] should reap her due reward *at the hand of the ten kings*." He adds that afterwards the Beast, which he also calls Antichrist, together with the False Prophet, should bring on the final conflict; thus, by implication excluding the Beast from the action of spoiling the Harlot. (*Tertullian de Res. Carn.*, chap. 25.)

Professor Salmon in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, also assigns the action of hating and destroying to the *kingdoms*, and not to the Beast. He says: "And finally it is foretold that the *provinces* should cast off the Roman domination . . . for this is the interpretation given to Revelation xvii. 16, 17, the ten *horns*, into whose heart God had put it for a time to give their kingdom to the Beast shall now hate the whore, etc." (*Introduction to New Testament*, p. 224.)

For Elliott's arguments in support of the reading, "*upon* the beast," see *Hor. Apoc.*, iv. p. 30.

the once subservient kingdoms of Europe towards the Romish Church, has already begun to be fulfilled, and may have a yet further development. The prophecy, he says, foretells that the kingdoms "shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire" (Rev. xvii. 16, R.V.). He points out how remarkably all this has begun to be realised in the spoliation of her revenues, the lowering of her prestige, the suppression of her monasteries, the expulsion of her Jesuit priests, and the consuming of her former glory and power, the language of the prophecy being borrowed from the punishment for unfaithfulness as laid down in the Levitical law (Lev. xxi. 9), and hence symbolically applied to an unfaithful Church. The piteous complaints which have issued from Romish sources from time to time concerning this treatment have amply illustrated and confirmed the figurative language of the prediction.

Dr. Gordon has some good remarks on this subject, showing that even if we concede to Futurists the reading "and the beast," their reasoning from it fails. He says: "If Daniel gives the key to Revelation as is generally admitted, a Beast means a dynasty or civil government. It is the *body* of the Beast, the Papal Empire, with its ten kingdoms, including rulers, people, territory, and dominion, that is here evidently meant. These that have long supported the harlot Church now turn and rend her. It is useless to say that by identifying the Papacy with the Beast, this verse would compel the conclusion that the Roman Pope finally destroys the Roman Church. There is a *Head* and a *Body* of the true Church; the *Head* is called *The Christ* (1 Cor. xi. 3), and the Body is called *The Christ* (1 Cor. xii. 12); but it does not follow, therefore, that when it is said that 'Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it,' we must conclude that He loved Himself, and gave Himself for Himself; for though Christ and the Church are mystically one, their actions and offices are separable. So the Papacy, as *head* of the Roman Empire in its ten-kingdomed condition, is called the Beast (Rev. xiii. 4, 5, 6), and the Empire itself, as the body, is called the Beast (Rev. xvii. 3). But though symbolically one, their actions and career are distinguishable."[1]

[1] *Ecce Venit.*, p. 260.

On every ground, therefore, the argument based upon this verse, which is constantly brought forward by Futurist writers and speakers, as though there was no such thing as an alternative reading, or an alternative meaning, and by which it is sought to throw ridicule upon the Historical system, and to negative the whole mass of evidence that proves the identity of the Beast with the Papacy, is shown to be an unwarranted and mistaken one.[1]

In connection with this point, it may be well to offer a brief sketch of the general meaning of Revelation xvii. and xviii. The fall of Babylon had been mentioned in the previous chapter, in the description of the pouring out of the seventh Vial, and these two chapters, in accordance with the frequent method in the Revelation, give *further details of the same subject.*

[1] To prevent confusion, it may be well to note some distinctions between the symbolisms in these prophecies concerning the Beast and the Harlot. The Harlot is the *corrupt Church of Rome*, as mentioned above. The Beast is the *Papal Imperial Power*, regarded in its two-fold aspect as a politico-ecclesiastical world-empire. In this capacity, according to the symbolism of the Woman seated on the Beast, the Imperial Power and world-wide influence of the Pope *supports* the Church, and is at the same time *guided* by it; for it is a matter of constant remark amongst those who are acquainted with the machinery of the Vatican, that there is "a power behind the Pope," namely, that of Jesuit advisers and dignitaries of the Church. It must also be remembered that the Papacy is a *twofold* Power, *spiritual* as well as *political*, as we have previously shown (p. 128). This completely removes the objection often made, that the Beast is a political Power, and so cannot mean the Papacy which is an ecclesiastical Power. This explains also how, in Revelation xiii., the second Beast, the body of the Romish Priesthood, is represented as supporting the first Beast, or Imperial Power of the Pope, while, in Revelation xvii., the same first Beast is represented as supporting the Woman, or corrupt Church of Rome, of which the Priesthood is a part. The fact is, the two powers combined in the Papal system, spiritual and political, *mutually support each other*, and this is just what the two-fold symbolism sets forth.

Again, it should be noticed that there is a distinction between the symbolism of the Second Beast or False Prophet, which means the *Romish Priesthood as a body*, and that of the Harlot. The symbolism of the Harlot, or faithless Woman, is the opposite of the faithful Woman of chapter xii. We have explained the faithful Woman, when dealing with that chapter, as the *true Church* of God's *faithful* people, *regarded as a visible Church* with public ordinances, teachers and institutions; which is at once the receptacle and holder forth of the true way of salvation (see p. 118). The faithless and corrupt Woman of chapter xvii. is the opposite of this. The relationship of the symbol of the Harlot to the second Beast or False Prophet is, therefore, that of the whole to its part.

That the two chapters refer to the same Babylon (the division into chapters being an artificial arrangement, as we know), and that this Babylon means Rome, is clear from a comparison of their contents. The highly figurative imagery of xviii. 3 exactly corresponds with that of xvii. 2. Again the description of the Woman, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, in xvii. 4, which is identified in the last verse of the chapter with Rome, the city that then reigned over the kings of the earth, exactly corresponds with the description of Babylon in xviii. 16, 23.

The main subject of both of these chapters, therefore, according to the angel's announcement, is the judgment of Babylon, or the Great Harlot.

The description of the appearance of the Woman, called Mystery, Babylon the Great, as given in chapter xvii. 4–6, has such a striking correspondence with the Church of Rome, that even writers of that community have been compelled to admit the likeness. As Alford well remarks: "This description needs no illustration for any who have ever witnessed, or even read of the pomp of Papal Rome." Bishop Wordsworth points out that "*scarlet, pearls, gold, and precious stones*, are thrice specified in these two chapters by St. John as characterising the mysterious Power portrayed," and he shows that these are precisely the adornments of the Papal robes. Indeed, they may be said to be more or less characteristic of all Romish display. Elliott adds to this palpable identification of the Harlot with the Romish Church a remarkable illustration furnished by Rome herself—a "judicial coincidence," as Alford calls it. He gives an engraving of a Jubilee medal struck in the time of Pope Leo XII., in which the Romish Church is represented as a woman holding forth a cup, the cup of the *Mass*, by which the corrupt doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is set forth, the central error of that Romish teaching which has fatally intoxicated the nations for so long. Moreover, these medals bear the remarkable inscription, "she sits over the whole earth." It is impossible not to see the correspondence of all this with the picture portrayed by St. John, chapter xvii., verses 1, 2, and 4, of the gorgeously arrayed "harlot that sitteth upon many waters," by whom "they that dwell in the earth were made drunken . . . having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations,"

the latter expression being the specific term in the Old Testament, whence the imagery is borrowed, for idolatrous teaching and worship.

This seventeenth chapter contains a brief retrospective view of her whole career of iniquity, and, as associated with it, of the history of the Beast, and of the "horns" or separate kingdoms (*v.v.* 7–12).[1] This association of the Beast with the career of the Harlot, or Church of Rome, proves of itself that the Beast cannot mean some coming man, as Futurists assert. The characteristic period of the Beast's prosperity, 1,260 years, which was more particularly indicated in chapter xiii., is the period during which the Woman is here described as living her career of corruption and exercising her fatal spell over the kingdoms.[2] The angel foretells that the *general relationship* between these three, the Harlot, the Beast, and the kings, during the long period while the Harlot was "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," as we read in verse 6, and while the kings, or kingdoms, were more or less under the fatal spell of her idolatrous and corrupt teachings, as symbolically described in verse 2, was to be that of *unanimity* as well as *contemporaneousness*. The horns, or kingdoms, should "receive authority as kings [*i.e.*, exist as separate kingdoms] for one hour with the Beast" (verse 12). The meaning of "*one*" here is "*one and the same*," just as in the following verse "*one* mind." This is shown by Wordsworth and Elliott, and, indeed, is required by the context. The time of their power was to be *for one and the same hour*, or period, with the Beast, namely, during the characteristic period of Papal prospering above mentioned, for that is the period more especially

[1] See pp. 168–9 for an explanation of the symbolism.

[2] It should be noted that some expressions in the prophecy of chapter xvii. point on beyond this period to the times of the end. Thus in verse 14 the antichristian warfare there spoken of means not only the warfare against the truth of Christ carried on during the 1,260 years of the Beast's prophetic career, but also points on to the final war of Armageddon yet to be brought about by an expiring effort of the Beast to regain its ascendancy. So, also, in verse 8, allusion is made to the final "perdition" of the Beast at that crisis; and the whole of chapter xviii. relates to the catastrophe of the completed downfall of Rome. These events take place in the time of the end after the 1,260 years, when the time of Papal prospering has passed, and the epoch of its destruction has set in.

symbolised in the vision; though, as a matter of fact, the separate kingdoms are to last up to the second coming of Christ. Also their *mind* was to be one and the same: "These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the Beast" (verses 13–17). *One-ness of mind*, and *one-ness of time* as regards the Beast and the kings is the idea presented, and the Harlot was to be supported by the Beast with the consent of the kings during the same period.

Thus unanimity between the three was to be a marked *general* feature, *characterising in the main these twelve centuries and a half.* The Papal power, and sacerdotal influence, and Romish error, were largely to prevail during these dark ages—a characteristic which has been amply verified by history. But, as we have seen,[1] it was foretold that this mutual complaisance between the political and spiritual powers was to receive a severe check towards the end of this period. A most remarkable reversal of the attitude of the "kings" in relation to the Harlot was to take place, namely, that spoliation of the Church which has already been explained. This would naturally seem to imply also a break of the unanimity between the kingdoms and the Beast which supports the Harlot. And this seems to be what is briefly indicated in the words of verse 17, where, referring to this unanimity of the kingdoms and the Beast, the angel adds: "For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished." The unanimity was to last as a general characteristic until the time should arrive for the *accomplishment* of these prophecies and for bringing about the judgment of the Harlot. And though the relation between the kingdoms and the Papacy would then naturally be strained, as they are at present, yet prophecy leads us to expect that the Papal Beast will regain sufficient influence over the greater part of them, at least to induce them to fall in with his designs which will ultimately bring about the last conflict, with regard to which the desire to recover the lost Temporal Power may be a prime motive of Papal action.

It should be remembered that a briefly compressed and mys-

[1] Page 194.

terious symbolic prophecy, like that of chapter xvii., must not be read as if it were written in the exact language of history. It is a record of a vision, and is to be regarded as a faint and shadowy picture in which the more prominent features dimly appear, rather than a clear photograph, where we see distinct details, and everything in due perspective.

As to the description of the spoliation of the Harlot by the kingdoms, already explained, in which it is said that they "shall burn her utterly with fire," Bickersteth gives a striking illustration. He relates how at the time of the pillage of the Papal States during the French Revolution, which was a remarkable *foretaste* of this prediction, the very same figure of speech was employed by the French Ambassador, who wrote to Napoleon, speaking of the Papacy contemptuously as "a carcase," and saying, "We are making it consume by a slow fire."

Hence the consumption by fire of the Woman, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, may be said to have begun at the French Revolution. It has been going on since. But it has to be completed in the final destruction, which is more especially the subject of chapter xviii. And, as we shall explain presently, the burning utterly by fire may very probably include a great physical catastrophe to be visited upon the material city of Rome at the close of this dispensation.

In Revelation xviii. we have a description, as we have said, of *the completion* of the judgment of the Harlot, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT. This final stage of her judgment is described in language borrowed from the Old Testament prophecies concerning the fall of ancient Babylon. The traffic and merchandise, both by vessels and land carriage, which were the pride of Babylon of old, are employed as figures to portray in symbolic prophecy the spiritual merchandise and traffic in souls which have formed a conspicuous feature in the modern Babylon of Rome; where Peter's Pence, legacies, pilgrimage offerings, Papal offerings, and such-like commodities have been exchanged, in conformity with strict commercial principles, for pardons, indulgences, blessings, release from purgatory, and so forth.[1]

[1] This correspondence with the imagery seems so obvious that it is strange

According to some of our ablest interpreters of prophecy, Alford, Elliott, Lange, and others, good reason can be shown for believing that the final overthrow and punishment of the Harlot which is here described will be accompanied by the destruction at the close of this dispensation of the material city of Rome by volcanic agency, for which the train seems already laid in the physical features of the locality, and only waiting for ignition by the Divine *fiat*. This anticipation is confirmed by the closing words of chapter xviii. : "And in her was found the blood of the prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth." As similar words, spoken by our Lord, foretelling the overthrow of the Apostate Jewish Church (Matt. xxiii. 35), involved the destruction of the *city* of Jerusalem, the centre of that apostasy, so it seems probable that the final overthrow of the apostate Church of Rome will be marked by the destruction of the material city of Rome.[1]

In connection with the above view, it may be interesting to quote the following paragraph, which recently appeared in a daily paper: "The German scientific journal *Prometheus* has a notice of the sudden formation of a lake in Italy near Lepreniano, in the province of Rome. It is more than half a mile in circumference, and the water is strongly impregnated with sulphur. It is intended to build baths and utilise the phenomenon if it is permanent. It will be well if nothing further happens; and, perhaps, it would be well to wait a little before building; the baths might go the way of those at Ischia. The bowels of the land between central Italy and Vesuvius hold so many dread surprises. Perhaps the whole region, so overwhelming in its purely human interest, is destined to disappear in a cataclysm."

The vivid picture in chapter xviii. 17, 18, of the shipmasters and mariners gazing in astonishment at "the smoke of her burn-

that Alford should have found a difficulty in the mercantile description here given of the mystic Babylon.

[1] Alford, commenting on Revelation xvi. 19, remarks that "the destruction of the *material city* of Rome is but the beginning of the execution of vengeance on the mystic Babylon," and the latter he rightly identifies with the Harlot, or Church of Rome. Similarly Bishop Wordsworth speaks of the fate of Babylon as the time "when God's judgment will have been executed upon the *city* and See of Rome." (*Union with Rome*, p. 66.)

ing," a detail repeated in xix. 3, recalls to our minds the accounts given by captains and sailors some years ago, of the huge column of smoke which they witnessed from their vessels, marking the overthrow of the island of Krakatoa in the South Seas by volcanic agency. The marine trade of ancient Babylonia, carried on by ships and river craft, from which the imagery is borrowed, was extensive. It is alluded to in Isaiah xliii. 14: "the Chaldæans in the ships of their rejoicing." (R.V. See Cheyne.)

It is remarkable that the events of the end of this dispensation bring into conspicuous notice the two great historical centres of influence, *Rome* and *Jerusalem*—the former the city of Antichrist, the latter of Christ. The former, if we have rightly interpreted these prophecies, is to go down into destruction, whilst the latter is to be rebuilt in more than its former glory, as we gather from Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and other prophetic utterances concerning the restoration of Israel.

From the explanation given above, it will be seen that the view, widely held by Futurist expositors, that the Babylon whose destruction is foretold in Revelation xviii. means a rebuilt Babylon upon the Euphrates, is a view that cannot, we believe, be reasonably entertained. They tell us that the vast area of the ancient city, now covered with sand and huge mounds of rubbish and buried ruins, is going to be restored to its former grandeur and importance, and to become the capital of the future individual Antichrist whom they expect, and the political and commercial centre of the world. For such an expectation there appears to be no reasonable ground whatever, either from a political or Scriptural point of view. On the contrary, in the great prophecy of the fall of Babylon in Jeremiah l. and li., which, together with the fall of Tyre in Ezekiel, is largely alluded to in this symbolic prophecy of the Revelation, it is distinctly stated that the ancient Babylon against which that Old Testament prophecy was directed,—the Babylon that is there spoken of as having wronged the Jews, the same Babylon which was then standing in all its glory, and not a new Babylon to arise out of its ruins,—should so fall as *never to rise again*. The beginning of this utter destruction and desolation was the fall of Babylon,

effected by Cyrus with his Medo-Persian armies, which are mentioned by name in the prophecy together with the details of the capture, thus identifying that event as being what was predicted.

Such was the beginning of the fall of Babylon foretold by Jeremiah. As Professor Rawlinson says in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*: "With the conquest of Cyrus commenced the decay and ruin of Babylon." But the work was gradual. The city lasted on for centuries. It was captured again and again by successive enemies. Alexander purposed to restore it to its former magnificence, but his purpose was frustrated, and so God's prediction remained true. The city eventually became superseded by the neighbouring capital Seleucia. When Jeremiah wrote his prophecy, more than a century before the capture by Cyrus, Babylon was in its glory. Historians tell us that its outer walls were some 300 feet high, and eighty feet broad with 100 gates, and enclosed an area of more than 100 square miles, nearly five times the size of London, covered with parks, gardens, and fields, as well as houses.[1]

Now this vast area has become a wide waste, with nothing but huge mounds of barren earth and rubbish, the "heaps" of which Jeremiah speaks in this prophecy, to tell of its former magnificence. The comparatively insignificant and modern town of Hillah, with some 10,000 inhabitants, on the banks of the river, is scarcely sufficient to mitigate the aspect of utter desolation that spreads over the whole site of the once magnificent capital of the world. In his prophecy, Jeremiah said of those same huge walls and gates that were then standing: "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly overthrown, and her high gates shall be burned with fire." Though shorn of their magnificent proportions by successive invasions, they lasted on in some sort for more than 1,000 years, but now they have so completely vanished that even their outline cannot be traced.

As to the theory of its becoming rebuilt, this would be in flat contradiction to God's Word. At the end of his prophecy, Jeremiah directed that "the book" containing it should be tied to a stone and cast into the midst of the Euphrates, with the addition of these words: "Thus shall Babylon sink, and *shall*

[1] See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible.*

not rise again." The sudden plunge of the stone into the river symbolised the beginning of Babylon's fall when Cyrus took it by surprise; the sinking of the stone that followed denoted the gradual ruin that was to be accomplished in succeeding centuries, and that the proud capital was to sink lower and lower till the final depth of degradation was reached *from which it should never rise.* The contrast afforded by the utter desolation that has now for so long reigned over this vast area compared with its former magnificence, affords a most striking correspondence to Jeremiah's description and that of other prophets; and, bearing in mind the character of Eastern language and prophetic imagery, may well be regarded as its complete fulfilment. But, if some of the expressions are thought by any to have not yet received their fulfilment, then all that can be said is that the desolation has to be carried out yet further, either in the remaining years of this dispensation, or during the Millennial age. The stone that was cast into the Euphrates by the direction of the prophet was not, after nearly reaching the bottom, to float again to the surface, and then once more to sink. The Divine prediction that accompanied that symbolic act distinctly announced that the Babylon then standing, against which Jeremiah prophesied, and the first stroke of whose downfall was to be its capture by Cyrus, should fall lower and lower, and *never* recover from its final degradation: "Thus shall Babylon sink, *and shall not rise again, because of the evil that I will bring upon her*" (Jer. li. 64).[1]

The Babylon whose destruction is described in Revelation

[1] The theory of a rebuilt Babylon largely rests upon Zechariah's obscure vision of the Ephah. But that symbolic prophecy affords no foundation for any such theory. It is interpreted by such able authorities as Dr. Pusey, Dr. Wright, and Dr. Alexander, also in Ellicott's and The Speaker's Commentaries, in quite a different manner, namely, as meaning that the Jews who had returned from Babylon, or Shinar, were to banish wickedness, symbolised by the Woman in the Ephah, away from the Holy Land to its more appropriate place in Shinar. It should be noted that the return of Judah and Israel, which is associated in Jeremiah l. 4, 5, with the judgment on Babylon, only received a partial fulfilment in the decrees issued by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes after the judgment had begun. As pointed out by Fausset, Cheyne, and others, the words look on in prophetic perspective to the time when Babylon should have sunk to its lowest depth, and to the return of the whole nation of the Hebrews which will take place at the Second Advent.

xviii. is, therefore, no rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates, but the same MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, which is mentioned in the previous chapter. Its application to *Rome*, as Alford says, is determined for us by the solution given in xvii. 18 immediately preceding. The Harlot, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, is there said to be "the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." A comparison of the opening verses of the two chapters shows, as we have said, that the Babylon of the one is the Babylon of the other; and as chapter xvii. announces the beginning of the judgment of the Harlot of Rome, so chapter xviii. describes the completion of that judgment, which will take place in immediate connection with Christ's coming, accompanied possibly, as we have explained, by the destruction of the material city of Rome, as a marked token of God's judgment for the terrible mischief to the Church of Christ that has proceeded from that centre.[1]

After this brief sketch of the meaning of Revelation xvii. and xviii., let us consider the close of the career of the Beast and the False Prophet, as it may be gathered from the brief anticipatory notice in Revelation xvi., and the fuller description in Revelation xix., compared with the prophecies in the Old Testament referring to the same subject.

If the Beast and the False Prophet be what we have endeavoured to prove them to be, then the same explanation of these symbolic figures applies to the closing scenes of their career, as witnessed by St. John in vision.

When we read in Revelation xvi. 13, 14, of the *Dragon*, the *Beast*, and the *False Prophet*, as the prime agents in bringing about the final war of Armageddon, we cannot imagine three visible corporeal beings on earth, working to stir up the war by breathing frog-like spirits out of their mouths; but, consistently with the Historical method which we have followed, assigning a symbolical meaning to these strange symbolic figures which St. John saw again and again in his visions, we must understand that *Satan*, together with the *Papal Power*, and the body of the *Romish Priesthood*, the most complete organization in the world,

[1] See further on this p. 403.

will work by all the dark means which may then be at their disposal, in order to embroil the nations, as they have often done before, and as in our own time they have endeavoured to stir up mischief in Ireland.[1]

We know from Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., and Zechariah xiv., that when the crisis arrives of the general war of which we have been speaking, there is to be a great Northern invader of Palestine, who will be at the head of a formidable confederacy of nations. There is also to be a Southern confederacy to oppose him. These two confederacies seem to be alluded to in the last five verses of the difficult prophecy of Daniel xi., under the titles of "the king of the North" and "the king of the South" respectively, who are described as being opposed to each other at "the time of the end."[2]

The chief of the Northern confederacy is spoken of (Ez. xxxviii. 2) as "Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal." There seems to be a very general agreement amongst prophetical interpreters that the Power here indicated is that of *Russia*, the Colossus of the North. Many have thought that the names, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, are perpetuated in Russia, Muscovy, and Tobolsk, though this is uncertain.

As to the opposing confederacy, that of the South, conspicuous mention is made in Ezekiel's description of "the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof"; and here, also, it is very generally considered amongst our best interpreters, that the power *of England* and her dependencies is what was foreshadowed in the prophecy. Tarshish, or Tartessus in Spain, was the most westerly colony of the great naval Power of Phœnicia. Its name denoted commercial and maritime pre-eminence. The largest trading vessels were called "ships of Tarshish." Hence, as Bishop Horsley and other commentators have pointed out, the ancient name of Tarshish was an apt prophetic symbol to foreshadow the greatest maritime and commercial Power of modern times.

[1] A fuller notice of the three frog-like spirits, and Armageddon, will be found later on in the explanation of the Sixth Vial.

[2] An explanation of the prophecy of Daniel xi. will be found in Appendix B.

We see, therefore, that prophecy indicates that the leading Powers in the two confederacies that will be opposed to each other in the general war of the last days,—the war of Armageddon, as it is called in the Revelation,—will be England and Russia corresponding to the King of the South and the King of the North, spoken of by Daniel.[1]

It is extremely interesting to read, in the light of modern events, in Egypt, a remarkable forecast that was made by Professor Birks, some forty or fifty years ago. His anticipations, which were based upon the prophecies we have referred to, and especially the closing portion of Daniel xi., have been most strikingly verified. Speaking of what might prove to be the fulfilment of the prediction concerning the pushing of the King of the South against the King of the North in the "time of the end," as foretold in the latter passage, he wrote: "Egypt has for some time been rising into prominence as a separate power. But still, Egypt alone seems too feeble to undertake any serious resistance to a confederacy so vast and mighty [as that of the King of the North]. It is more natural to suppose that this country is merely the salient point of attack, and that the power which occupies it, and thereby claims the prophetic title, King of the South, is one of wider influence, and of other possessions. That the same power which holds the vast Southern empire of India may then also have possession of Egypt, and from thence push against the inroads of its Northern adversary, it would be rash to expect with confidence, but the conjecture is not unreasonable. The course of events and the necessities of commerce appear more and more to be grouping together India, Egypt, and Britain. The designs of France upon Egypt, and of Russia upon India, have long been the subject of political discussion and military conjecture. Whenever, therefore, all the continent shall be gathered under one head, as King of the North, it seems not improbable that the maritime empire of Britain may be the rival power, and that its acquisition of Egypt, as the emporium of its Indian commerce, will give to it the prophetic character of the King of the South; while the same policy which has led before in Kabul to such fearful disaster may be repeated once more, with results still

[1] See further on this, Appendix B.

more grievous, in this pushing military violence against the grand and overwhelming confederacy of the northern power." [1]

No one who reads this prophetical anticipation of nearly half a century ago can help being struck with the remarkable fulfilment of it which has been taking place for several years past. The events of Alexandria, Tel-el-Kebir, Khartoum, Suakim, and the important Southern campaign that has been more recently entered upon, seem, as by an ever-strengthening chain, to have drawn England into a position with regard to Egypt which her successive governments have been compelled to adopt, in spite of all obstacles. England is already in possession as the dominant Power in that country. The policy has been forced upon her by the irresistible tendency of events, as the world would say, but, as Christians will account for it, by the guiding hand of the God of prophecy, who moulds the destinies of nations so as to work out the foreordained designs of His infinite wisdom in managing the course of this world. And even if the jealousy of other Powers should succeed in checking for a time the full development of England's influence in Egypt, yet what has already happened may surely be taken as an earnest and token that the prophetical forecast with regard to England occupying the position of King of the South in the conflict of the time of the end, which has already been so remarkably confirmed, will ultimately receive its complete fulfilment.

The further observations of Professor Birks on the far-reaching prediction contained in these verses of Daniel are equally interesting and deserve serious attention, showing, as they do, the indications given by prophecy that England may not so entirely escape the visitations of judgment in the latter days as many would fondly imagine. There are national sins for which we are accountable. There is the opium traffic forced upon China in spite of her protest and that of her missionaries. There is the drink traffic which has ever been the demoralising accompaniment of English colonisation. There is the unaccountable and inexcusable reaction in the English Church from the light of the Reformation towards the darkness of the Papal Antichrist,—not to speak of the rapid spread of rationalism, and other secularising influences.

[1] Birks, *The Two Later Visions of Daniel*, p. 334.

It may justly be feared that in the time of the end, if not before, there will be a remembrance of England's national sins before God. In his further explanation of this prophecy of Daniel, Professor Birks compares it with that of Ezekiel xxxviii., and shows how England and her allies seem to be destined to suffer reverses in Egypt and its neighbourhood in the latter days, at the hand of the great Northern invader with his overwhelming forces. He comments as follows: "'And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships' (Dan. xi. 40). The theatre of the campaign will now be, like those of Antiochus, in Palestine and Egypt. The great leader of the North will overflow and pass on to the South, to crush the power which has assailed him. The description answers exactly to the words of Ezekiel, where he predicts the march of Gog, the prince of Magog, against the land of Israel. His army are said by Ezekiel to be 'horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great company with buckler and shields, all of them handling swords' (Ezek. xxxviii. 4). The character of this march is then described: 'Thou shalt ascend, thou shalt come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, and all thy hordes, and many peoples with thee" (verse 9). 'Thou shalt come from thy place out of the uttermost parts of the north, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army' (verse 15).[1]

"The King of the North was to enter into the glorious land, and to overthrow many countries. Such also is the description of Gog in Ezekiel. The fierce invader will pass 'like a cloud' over the glorious land of Israel, and all resistance will be overcome. But in the eager pursuit of his enemy the King of the South, he does not stay at first to reduce the border countries beyond Jordan. 'These shall be delivered out of his hand, Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon' (Dan. xi. 41). The same districts which before, when held by Arabian tribes, escaped the dominion of the Turkish invaders, will equally be passed over by this fiercer King of the North, in

[1] It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the forces and equipments of the future are described by the prophet in terms that properly belong only to armies as they existed in his own time.

the rapidity of his progress. And thus, perhaps, the words of Isaiah xvi. 4 may be fulfilled anew, and the land of Moab and the rocks of Petra be a refuge to the outcasts of Israel from the spoiler and oppressor of the last days.

"The next event announced is the victory of the fierce invader over the land of Egypt, and his full possession of its treasures. At present these treasures are but small. But a few years of wise and firm government, should it become the emporium of the Indian commerce, might soon enable it to rival and surpass its riches in ancient times. And this may perhaps be its condition when Gog shall have mustered his host. The Libyans and Ethiopians, who are at his steps, are mentioned also in the earlier prophecy of Ezekiel, 'Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya, [Cush and Put, R.V.] with them' (Ezekiel xxxviii. 5). All the strength of Africa after this Egyptian conquest would naturally fall under his sway."

The prophecy of Daniel xi. further says concerning the Northern invader: "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him" (verse 44). By the tidings out of the East and the North Professor Birks seems to think that the return of the ten tribes from the East to Palestine is alluded to. But this can scarcely be so. We shall see later on that the final gathering of the dispersed of Israel will not take place till after Christ's appearance at the second Advent.[2] Indeed, His manifestation as the Deliverer of His people at the last great crisis of this dispensation, as foretold in Zechariah xiv., will be the convincing event which will bring about the conversion of the nation at large, and so will constitute the signal for their general and complete return.

As to the exact nature of these "tidings out of the east and north," we cannot, of course, speak with any certainty where only brief and mysterious hints are given. But if Russia with her allies should hereafter prove victorious in Egypt, and endeavour to establish her power there, thus threatening England's communications with India by way of the Red Sea, nothing would be more probable than that England, with forces drawn from India,

[1] Birks, *The Two later Visions of Daniel*, p. 334, etc.

[2] See p. 360.

and perhaps aided by Afghanistan, would deliver a counter-attack from the East on the flank of the Russian forces, and endeavour in turn to sever her communications, and to obtain possession of the commanding position of Palestine. And thus the prophecy concerning the head of the Northern confederacy, that "tidings out of the *East* and out of the *North* shall trouble him," would receive its fulfilment. And then Russia would have to retreat from the South, and concentrate her forces in the Holy Land, which would thus become the scene of the final issue. This is just what seems to be foreshadowed by the further words in Daniel's prophecy: "And he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain [*i.e.* he will form a military encampment between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean]; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." [1]

The same final crisis is here foretold as in the last chapter of Zechariah, where Jerusalem is described as being besieged and taken, and Christ descends to the Mount of Olives, in order to deliver the chosen nation in the hour of extremity, and to overthrow the antichristian hosts assembled in the neighbourhood.

It is interesting further to notice how these prophetical anticipations as regards the King of the North and the King of the South, and their respective confederacies are unwittingly confirmed by the writings of politicians. For example, in a political article in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1895, we read as follows:—"Europe in Asia, for practical purposes, consists of two Powers, *England* and *Russia*. The empires of Britain and of Muscovy *have the overlordship, the one of the South, the other of the North*." That these two powers, with their allies, will one day be ranged in antagonism to each other is indeed the commonplace observation of all who study the trend of politics in the East.

As another example we may give the following forecast. It may be premature or defective, but it is interesting as showing how political anticipations agree with prophecy. The foreign correspondent of one of our principal daily papers writes: "A

[1] Daniel xi. 45 (R.V.). See further on this, Appendix B.

telegram from Constantinople published in Vienna confirms news which reaches here from Sebastopol. The telegram says the Armenian question has all at once entered upon an acute stage. Russia, it is alleged, considers the time has come when it should realise the plans of Peter the Great, and the fleet is lying ready for battle at Sebastopol and Odessa, and Caucasian armies are being concentrated on the Armenian frontier. . . . Russia's plan would be to keep for herself Armenia, the provinces of Asia as far as Alexandretta and Constantinople. France would take Syria, Palestine, and Jerusalem. England would have Egypt and the Eastern shores of the Persian Gulf. Austria must be content with Servia and Macedonia; Italy with Tripoli; Greece would have Thessaly, Crete, and the Isles." It is easy to see from the above that should some such partition of Turkey be ultimately followed by a rupture amongst the Powers, Russia and her traditional ally would be the leading nations in the Northern confederacy, and England, with those who support her, would constitute the confederacy of the South.

There can be little doubt that the final conflict of Armageddon in Palestine will be closely connected with what is called in political circles the Eastern Question. In fact, it will be the Eastern Question in its last phase. No politician doubts that when that crisis comes Russia will take a leading part. Russia is fully aware of her destiny. In a prominent daily paper we have the following notice of the tone of the Russian press on this matter:—"A significant article appears in the *Novoie Vremia*, headed, 'Who is to decide the Eastern Question, and how is it to be done?' The writer, after declaring that the Eastern Question is purely a Russian one, continues: 'No Russian who knows the history of his country doubts that the Eastern Question, as soon as it is ripe for solution, must be solved in no other way than by Russia, and according to her plan. . . . To this position we have been brought by historical development, and our relations to the East are practically of such a kind that we cannot give up our part without endangering our whole future.'"

It will, indeed, be a dark hour for the world if these prophetical and political anticipations come true, and Russia and England eventually enter upon a conflict, as King of the North, and King

of the South, respectively. But there is one ray of light in the gloomy prospect, and this is, that dark as will be the hour, it will be the hour before day—the Millennial day.

It should be noticed that the head of the Northern confederacy, spoken of in the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, must not be confounded, as is often done, with the Beast of the Revelation, though they will be acting in unison in the final war. The chief of the Northern confederacy, as we have seen, will probably be Russia, as represented by its ruler at the time. And so he will not be himself the Beast, but the principal one of the "Kings" that are to be stirred up by the Beast, or Papal Power, to enter upon that fatal conflict. He will thus be the chief political and military agent of the Beast in his final ambitious scheme.[1]

We know that the religion of Russia is essentially of very much the same nature as that of Rome. We know, further, that the Papacy has long been brooding over schemes for the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches. It is possible, therefore, that at the crisis which we are considering the Pope may offer to the Czar that *political* headship over the world which Napoleon said was the ultimate aim of Russia, on condition that Russia will recognise and establish the *Pope* as the universal *spiritual* monarch, and thus to divide the world between them. Time will reveal.[2]

[1] See further on this point, Appendix B.

[2] Since the above was written, the following remarkable confirmation has appeared in the public papers with reference to the Franco-Russian alliance. The Rome correspondent of the *Standard* writes: "The *Observatore Romano*, the direct organ of the Vatican, has suddenly thrown off all reserve as to the relation of the Pope to Russia and France." He then adds that a most important article had appeared in the above-named Italian paper, with reference to the following remark, said to have been made by Signor Crispi to a French reporter about the Russian alliance: "Such an alliance seems to me unnatural: you had one Pope, and now you have two." On this the *Observatore* says: "We will put on one side the question how far it may be correct to give the Czar the title of Pope; but we believe that things have now arrived at a point at which it may be said that the Pope of St. Petersburg may be, in the hand of Providence, a potent means of completely leading back France to the Pope of Rome. It is precisely because this Franco-Russian accord is not against nature, as Signor Crispi asserts, that it conceals a providential design which will resolve itself into the most splendid triumph for the only Pope

Some interesting information concerning the scheming ambition of the Papacy in the present, and its power to embroil the nations in the future, is given in a remarkable article contributed to *McClure's Magazine* by M. de Blowitz, who from his experience and political insight is admitted to be an authority on such a matter. He says: "To the Vatican flow innumerable missives from every corner of the world, and could I only tell some of them, it would be seen how long still is the arm extending from the shadow of St. Peter's: how dreadful still are the lips that speak in the shade of the Vatican. I should show the Holy Father and his cardinals writing to the Emperor of Austria, directing him by counsel and advice, and sometimes almost by orders. I should show Prince Bismarck continuing, since his fall, to hold before the eyes of the Pope glimpses of the more or less partial restoration of the Temporal Power. I should show Leo XIII. now trying to unite, now to alienate France and Russia, according as at the moment this or that policy seems to him most propitious for his own cause." [1]

It should be noted that the Southern confederacy is not alluded to in the Revelation. The symbolical vision of St. John at the close of the nineteenth chapter refers only to the final crisis, when the Northern invader with his allies, having seized upon the Holy Land and sacked Jerusalem, as we learn from Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix. and Zechariah xiv., is stopped in his career of victory and overthrown by Christ.[2]

whom God has placed to govern the Church upon earth; and Signor Crispi, if he pronounced that phrase, has, without knowing, and certainly without wishing it, exactly touched the dominant note in this great event of the present epoch. Because since, *nolens volens*, the primary reason of the Franco-Russian accord was determined by the Pope, so its final result will be for the Pope." Coming events cast their shadow before!

[1] Cited in *The Christian* of July 27, 1893. This completely refutes those who say that the Pope is only an ecclesiastical Power.

[2] Some have felt a difficulty in the idea of an invasion by Russia, at the head of an immense confederacy, directed against such an utterly insignificant enemy as the Jews located in Palestine would be, without fortifications or means of resistance. But this difficulty is completely removed by the consideration that there will be a powerful opposing confederacy, as explained above, and *this* will be the real antagonist of the Northern confederacy. We may suppose that at that time the strength of the Southern confederacy will be mainly engaged in defending other points, such as Egypt, and India, and

It should also be borne in mind that the object of this final war is a two-fold one, first, to secure the supremacy over the world, and secondly, as subsidiary to that, to seize upon the land which God has given by an inalienable covenant to His ancient people. Hence the Papal Power, which has ever warred against the faithful followers of the Lamb, and which, inspired by Satan, and supported by the subordinate Clergy, as symbolised by the united action of the Beast, the Dragon, and the False Prophet, will originate the final war in order to carry out the above scheme, is said in Revelation xvii. 14, and xix. 19, to "make war against the Lamb" and "against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." Since Christ identifies Himself with His people, and since He alone is the rightful universal Monarch of the world, and also the King and Deliverer of the Jews, this war, in view of its avowed object, was fitly foreshadowed in this symbolic vision as a war *against Him*. But "the battle is the Lord's," and just at that crisis when the antichristian forces seem on the point of succeeding in their scheme, the Lord Jesus descends from heaven with His saints, and destroys these proud and exulting enemies, like Sennacherib's host of old, by His Divine *fiat*, "the sword of His mouth."

Hence when we read in Revelation xix. 19, where the coming of Christ to overthrow His enemies at this same crisis is described, "And I saw the beast, and the Kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse and against his army," we must not, of course, fall into the error of Futurist literalism, or imagine that this passage of Scripture means that one day Christ will be seen descending from the "heaven opened" sitting upon a white horse, with

in maintaining the supremacy at sea. And Russia, seeing the immense strategical importance of Palestine as a point from which to dominate the Suez Canal, and to threaten our communications with India, and carrying out her traditional design of obtaining possession of the Holy Places, will take advantage of the undefended and perhaps neutralised condition of Palestine, and make a sudden dash to secure the prize, seizing upon the supplies afforded by the country in accordance with Ezekiel's prophecy, and occupying the territory for military purposes. From the description in Zechariah it would appear that at least Jerusalem will at that time be in a position to make some show of resistance against the invader, since it is described as being besieged.

myriads of saints and angels also on white horses, and that two supernatural individuals, Antichrist or the Beast, and a False Prophet, are to lead an army with an array of modern artillery, and breech-loading rifles, and smokeless powder, in order to shoot down Christ and His heavenly followers. It must be obvious to a sober judgment that this passage is simply the record of a vision which St. John saw at Patmos; and a "mind that hath wisdom," which is mentioned in the Revelation as a needful qualification for understanding these mysterious predictions, should seek to discern the prophetic meaning of the figures which St. John saw. We trust that the explanation which has been given is a consistent and reasonable interpretation. It shows us that this vision of Revelation xix. 19, etc., in which St. John beheld the symbolic figures of the Beast and the False Prophet leading kings and armies against Christ and His armies, was a symbolic prediction of the final crisis of that general war of nations at the close of this dispensation of which we have spoken, and which is foretold in Ezekiel, Zechariah and other Scriptures, It shows that the Powers symbolised by the Beast and the False Prophet, namely, the Papal Imperial Power and that of the body of the Romish Priesthood, will be *chief agents* in bringing about that war, and will in that sense be *actors in it.* This war will culminate in an attack on Jerusalem, when the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with His saints, and, as Zechariah tells us, "His feet will stand at that day on the Mount of Olives." He will appear in His character of King of the Jews and Prince of righteousness, and will, as we have said, by His Divine *fiat*, and miraculous agency, annihilate those who are at once enemies of the Jews, enemies of truth, and enemies of Christ.[1]

But we are told by Futurist writers that the description of the final doom of the Beast and the False Prophet given at the close of Revelation xix., where we read, verse 20, that, "they twain were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone," *must* refer to two single individuals of the future. On the contrary, at the close of the very next chapter, Revelation xx. 14, we read in a similar way that "death and Hades were cast into the lake of

[1] A further notice of the crisis of Armageddon will be found in the explanation of the sixth Vial given later on (p. 367).

fire"; and here it is obvious that two actual individuals cannot possibly be meant, but that the description is simply a figurative way of foretelling that those conditions, that of death and that of Hades, will then be finally done away with.[1] Just so, therefore, St. John's vision, in which he saw those two strange and monstrous figures of the Beast and the False Prophet cast into the Lake of Fire at the conclusion of the final crisis of the war of Armageddon, cannot be taken to mean that two remarkable individuals of the future are going to be carried bodily from that battle-field and thrown into a fiery lake, any more than we are to suppose from the description that follows, at the beginning of chapter xx., that Satan is also to be visible on the battle-field in bodily form, and to be actually bound with a chain and cast into the "abyss." In consistency with all that has gone before, what John saw must be regarded as a symbolic prophecy given in vision, of the doom which, at the *close* of the general war of nations, will fall upon the same three prime agencies that had previously been spoken of in Revelation xvi. 13, 14, as having *originated* the war. And the doom thus foreshadowed is that the Power of the Pope and that of the Romish Priesthood, as evil agencies in the world, are at that crisis to be brought to an end *at once and for ever*. This was symbolised to St. John by the casting of the Beast and the False Prophet into the "*lake of fire*"; whilst the power of Satan is at the same crisis to be broken, and to be kept in restraint during the reign of Christ, as symbolised by the binding and casting into the "abyss."

But it is further urged that the Beast and the False Prophet are said to be cast "*alive*" into the lake, and how can this refer to systems or Powers? The explanation is not difficult. If those figures in St. John's vision were symbolic figures, as we have explained, then the detail mentioned of their being *alive* when cast into the Lake of Fire will have a symbolical signification also, and must mean that these Powers were to remain in *active existence* right up to the coming of Christ, and then to be *suddenly* overthrown and destroyed.[2]

[1] Similarly Death and Hades are symbolically personified in the fourth Seal. See page 289.

[2] The expression reminds us of the sudden destruction of Korah, in Num-

There remains a mysterious passage, which is mentioned in the *Abstract* as supporting the Futurist interpretation, and which we must therefore briefly notice. The passage in question is Revelation xx. 10, where we read of the Devil at the end of the Millennial reign of Christ, being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, "*where are also the beast and the false prophet*," who were cast into it a thousand years earlier, at the beginning of Christ's reign according to the passage which we have just explained. At first sight it certainly seems difficult to see how two systems or evil agencies could be thus spoken of. But when we remember that all this is in connection with the fact that the Beast, whose actions and doom St. John had contemplated in vision, was certainly a monster form, unlike any conceivable reality, and confessedly a symbol, then we have a clue to the interpretation. For what is it that is here the chief point of the description? It is the doom of Satan. Canon Fausset well remarks on this passage, "the 'lake of fire' is his final doom; as the 'bottomless pit' (or abyss), verse 3, was his temporary prison." We have already explained the meaning of "the abyss" in the Revelation, as being the proper home of Satan and his evil spirits at the present time, though they are not yet absolutely confined there.[1] At the beginning of the Millennial reign of Christ, as we learn from Revelation xx. 3, Satan is to be cast in there and kept there, and so to be restrained from deceiving the nations during that happy period. At the end of the Millennium he is permitted, according to God's all-wise, though, to us, mysterious plan, doubtless for probational purposes, once more to resume his malicious work of deceiving the nations upon earth with disastrous results. Then, at last, his power is crushed for ever, and the *final* doom is pronounced upon him. When, therefore, we read, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet," it means that the same doom will then be inflicted upon Satan that was before pronounced on them; and the mention of those symbolic visionary figures as being still there,

bers xvi. 33, where it is said that he and his company "went down alive into the pit," in the midst of their active rebellion.

[1] See p. 186.

must indicate that the sentence pronounced at the *beginning* of Christ's reign on the evil agencies thus symbolised, to the effect that they should be overthrown and never again exercise their baneful influence, still remained in force at the *end* of it, and would never be repealed. It emphasises the fact that the sentence of "the Lake of Fire" is a *final* sentence. This final sentence is not only to be pronounced upon Satan at this great crisis, the end of the ages, but also, as we read in verse 13, upon Death and Hades. We must add the solemn fact stated in verse 15, that it is also to be the doom of the lost.

In a highly metaphorical book like the Revelation, we need not attempt to go further into these mysteries, or to define accurately what God has not so defined. The Futurist literal and individual interpretation of the doom of the Beast and the False Prophet, which involves the idea of two actual human beings cast alive into a lake of fire and existing there by themselves for a thousand years, until Satan and the rest of the lost are also cast in, is neither a reasonable interpretation, nor is it required by the terms employed in Scripture.

We would submit to the judgment of our readers whether the explanation which we have given be not the true interpretation of the vision which St. John saw, of the Beast and the False Prophet and the Kings of the earth, with their armies, gathered to war against Him that sat upon the white horse attended by His saints, and of the doom which these enemies, together with the Dragon, were seen respectively to meet with at the crisis described.

On the other hand, the Futurist view, which asserts the literal interpretation of this as well as of the other visions in the Revelation, and which takes the many and detailed prophecies, given for the most part in symbolical language, in Daniel, in 2 Thessalonians ii., and in the Revelation of St. John, concerning the Antichrist, or Beast,—prophecies which, we have endeavoured to show, refer to the Papal Power,—and explains them as if they were literal descriptions of the individual Antichrist whom they expect, is a view which leads to error and confusion, and to such extravagance of interpretation as frightens sober-minded people away from the subject of prophecy altogether.

Whether or not the *last individual representative* of the Papal Power, which we have shown to be the Power symbolised by the eighth head of the Beast—in other words, whether or not the last Pope may, like Antiochus, or Nero, in past ages, exhibit in a striking degree some of the chief characteristics of the Beast, or Papal Antichrist, of which he will be the last representative—is a matter we may well leave for the future to decide. Such an one, however, should he appear, would not be *the fulfilment* of the Antichrist, but only an *after illustration*, so to speak, on the individual scale, of that which has received its proper fulfilment on the grand scale in the long and baneful career of the Papacy.

The practical thing for us to do is not to fill our minds and the minds of others with anticipations, not to say dreams, of some supernatural individual in the future, but rather to recognise the fact that the great Antichrist foretold in prophecy *has come*, has long been working havoc in the Church of Christ, is doing so now in our midst, and will work still more mischief before he is destroyed by the coming of Christ.

Dr. Gordon, in his volume *Ecce Venit* ("Behold, He cometh," Rev. i. 7, *Vulgate*), after noticing some of the many proofs that have come before us of the identity of the Papacy with the Antichrist, well remarks, with reference to the Futurist view of these prophecies: "A system of exposition which withdraws our attention from these coincidences, and sets us to gazing into blank space for something to emerge of which not even the shadow is in sight, we cannot think profitable. . . . Such correspondences of history with prophecy, of fact with prediction, as these that we have pointed out, cannot occur by chance. And in view of them we may as certainly hold the Papacy to be the fulfilment of Paul's [and Daniel's, and John's] prediction of the Antichrist, as we hold the face of a coin to be the fulfilment of the die in which it was struck.

"Taking its rise in the beginnings of the age, gradually strengthening and maturing till fully developed, with temporal and spiritual sovereignty centring in one head, it has lived on for more than twelve hundred years, and there it sits to-day on its seat in Rome, in spite of every likelihood that it would long ago have passed away, the longest line of rulers the Western world

has ever seen. As the Jewish succession remains unbroken, that the last generation of cast-off Israel may confront the descending Lord at His advent, looking on Him whom they pierced, and mourning because of Him with saving penitence, that "so all Israel may be saved"; so, likewise, the long succession of hierarchy continues, that the last Pontifex Maximus may stand face to face with the Lord at His appearing, and receive his doom, in the cutting off of his usurping line for ever. As we read all this, let it be with bowed heads and with weeping eyes, while we ponder the lesson of the terrible consequences of pride, and ambition, and worldliness when permitted to run their course in the Church of God." [1]

One cannot but hope that a change of attitude may come over the minds of some of those who are at present inclined towards Futurism. As the crisis of the end draws on, prophetical students should present a united front. The Antichrist has entered upon the last stage of his existence. The 1,260 years which were indicated by prophecy as the characteristic period of his career, or time of prospering, have already run out, and the stage of decadence marked by the downfall of the Temporal Power has set in.[2] This final stage is shown by prophecy to be the precursor of Christ's coming again. It needs the aid of consentient prophetical exposition to proclaim the fact to the world. The Antichrist is making a desperate attempt to recover ascendancy in England, and students of prophecy, as well as lovers of their country, should stand shoulder to shoulder in order to unmask and resist him. The Antichrist is brooding over schemes to effect a re-union, and to regain lost power in the world, schemes which may ultimately, perhaps before very long, bring about that general war which all expect must come sooner or later; and it needs a harmonious voice from prophetical students, and not a discordant one as at present, in order that the trumpet of warning may give forth no uncertain sound as to the great crisis which is steadily approaching.

[1] *Ecce Venit*, pp. 127–131.

[2] See this more fully explained, pp. 136–145.

CHAPTER III

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE QUESTION OF THE ANTICHRIST. PROOF THAT THE ANTICHRIST OF PROPHECY IS NOT AN INFIDEL ANTICHRIST.

On the occasion when the paper on the Antichrist, or final head of the Beast, was read before the Prophecy Investigation Society, the substance of which has been expanded in the foregoing pages, the objection was put forward that the Papacy cannot be the Antichrist, because the Antichrist of prophecy is described as an *infidel* Antichrist. The Scripture especially relied upon in support of this objection was the well-known passage in 1 John ii. 22 : "This is the Antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son" (R.V.). And it was urged that, since the Pope acknowledges both God and Christ, he cannot be Antichrist.

As this objection constantly occurs in Futurist writings, and is also employed by Romanists, as might be expected, it may be well to place before the reader the argument in reply, which proves that the idea of an infidel Antichrist is a mistaken one, and that it is based upon a misunderstanding of St. John's words. It can be shown that the Antichrist spoken of by St. John is not an open adversary, or infidel, but *a professing Christian.*

The meaning of St. John's description of the Antichrist is ably set forth by Bishop Westcott in the *Speaker's Commentary on St. John's Epistles.* He there says, in words that contain the key of the question : "It seems most consonant to the context to hold that 'Antichrist' here describes one who, *assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ.*" That this is the true meaning of St. John's description of the Antichrist has been pointed out by Elliott, Lücke, Professor Rothe, and other able commentators,

and, indeed, should be obvious to any one who studies the context of the passages. Wrong teaching about the person and work of Christ has ever been Satan's great weapon against Him. A comparison of all the passages where the word 'Antichrist' occurs (1 John ii. 18–23; iv. 3; and 2 John 7) shows that the antichristian spirit, which in St. John's day animated the false but *professedly Christian* teachers of whom he speaks, took the form of corrupting the truth of the Gospel with regard to *the person and office of Christ.* On the first of these passages—"Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, etc."—Bishop Westcott observes that the denial here spoken of does not refer to outsiders, to the unbelieving Jews, but to the heresy of those who, while *professing to be Christians*, adopted the Gnostic theory "that the '*æon Christ*' descended on the *man Jesus* at His baptism, and left Him before the passion." Such false teaching by professing Christians St. John speaks of in the other passages, 1 John iv. 2, 3 and 2 John 7, as a denial "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." It cuts at the root of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and ruins the Gospel. Moreover, since the truth of the Father is inextricably bound up in the truth of the Son, St. John says that such a denial of the Son as this, which is fatal to the Christian faith, amounts to a denial of the Father also: "This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the *Son*, the same hath not the Father." To be false to the One is to be false to the Other.[1]

It is clear therefore that the term "deny" in these passages is not used in the infidel sense of *denying the existence of* God and Christ, but is applied to those who, while professing Christianity, corrupt the doctrine "as the truth is in Jesus," and so *prove false to* Christ. Such teachers of apostasy are said by St. John to "deny" the Lord, and, by implication, to deny the Father also.[2]

Of this corruption of the truth of Jesus by those who profess to

[1] 1 John ii. 22, 23. The same thought is expressed in 2 John 9.

[2] Polycarp, who wrote soon after the time of St. John, is cited by Elliott as describing the "antichrists" to whom St. John alluded. He explains them to be *false brethren bearing the name of Christ in hypocrisy.* And St. Augustine with reference to such false teachers, who, professing to belong to Christ,

belong to Him St. John says, in chapter iv. 3: "And this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof [*i.e.*, as the Greek shows, of *which Spirit*, not of *whom*] ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already" (R.V.). That is to say, the spirit of Antichrist, which had already in St. John's day begun to work in corrupting the truth of Christ, was destined in the course of this age (the "last hour" or period of which St. John speaks, and which we see from St. Peter's quotation from Joel, in Acts ii. 17, means this dispensation dating from Pentecost), to manifest itself in that far greater and more terrible form which had been foretold by Daniel and St. Paul.

In the above quoted passage, therefore (chap. iv. 3), St. John, as Bishop Westcott shows, speaks of these false Christian teachers and corrupters of the truth of Christ as constituting the personification of "the spirit of the antichrist" which was working *in mystery* in his day. Just so the successive heads of the Papal Apostasy constitute the personification of the spirit of the Antichrist in its *open development and manifestation* in that gigantic system of corruption of the truth of Christ which is represented by the Pope of Rome.

Bishop Westcott, as we have seen, describes St. John's Antichrist as "one who, assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ." The compound Greek word *anti*-Christ, not only means

practically dishonour Him, quotes Titus i. 16: "They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny Him."

For a further example of the use of the word "deny," meaning, not to *deny the existence of*, but to *prove false to*, compare 2 Timothy ii. 13, where it is said that God "cannot deny Himself." (See *Grimm's New Testament Lexicon.*)

We may add the testimony of Dr. Gordon on this meaning of the word "deny" in St. John's Epistles. He says: "We know how, at this point, some have started on an adventurous hunt into the future for an Antichrist who is at once a God-denier and a God-pretender. . . . But the candid reader has only to compare this word 'deny' as employed by John with its use by Paul, and Peter, and Jude, in their predictions of the falling away, to see that the reference is beyond question to the denial of *apostasy*, and not to the denial of infidelity. The anomaly of bald infidel worship, exacted by one who at once deifies and undeifies, has no place, we are persuaded, in this prophecy. Nor has that other conception of a Napoleonic demigod drunk with the infatuation of world rule,—a conception which has greatly coloured the imaginations of many expositors." *Ecce Venit*, p. 118.

one who acts *against* Christ, but it also includes the idea of one who acts against Him by putting himself or others *in the place of* Christ, the preposition *ἀντί* having both these meanings. The Pope therefore exactly corresponds to the full meaning of the term. Assuming to be *in the place of* Christ as His Vicar upon earth, (a blasphemous title, since the *Holy Ghost* is the One who fulfils that office) he really acts *against* the interests and position of Christ, by invading His attributes, by exalting the Virgin in His place, by persecuting His saints, and by corrupting His Gospel. Thus he *denies*, or *is false to*, the Christ in whose name he professes to act.

We may add that in St. John's last notice of the Antichrist (2 John 7–10), it should be obvious to every one that he refers, not to an open infidel, but to one who, professing to be a Christian teacher, nevertheless, corrupts the truth of Christ, and in that sense *denies* Christ; for the apostle there warns the Christian lady to whom he writes not to show any hospitality or encouragement to any such false teachers who may claim her hospitality as Christian brethren.

In illustration of the point we are dwelling upon, the following excellent editorial remarks may be quoted from the pages of a Christian periodical: "Rome invites Divine vengeance by her multiplied blasphemous assertions. From the last issue of *L'Eglise Libre* we learn that in a cantata entitled 'Le Noel des Ouvriers,' dedicated to Leo XIII., in commemoration of the French working-men's pilgrimage to Rome last autumn, the Pope has been addressed and referred to as 'New Christ' and 'New Saviour'! (Nouveau Christ . . . Nouveau Sauveur). We agree with our contemporary's remark: 'This iniquity, this blasphemy, does not surprise us. Rome has long denied the old Saviour, the Christ of the Gospels, and ours, and has put in His place the idol of the Vatican.' When 'New Christ' hides 'Very Christ,' whom do we see but 'Anti-Christ'?"[1]

As another writer says: "Mariolatry practically *denies* the mediatorship of Christ. St. Augustine, the evangelical Bishop of Hippo, A.D. 400, said that 'whoever directed men to any other mediator than Christ must be esteemed Antichrist.'"

[1] From *The Christian* of February 23rd, 1893.

This marked feature of the Papal Antichrist, namely, that he puts others *in the place of* Christ, and thus *denies* to Christ His proper position, and so works *against* Him, according to the meaning of the term *Antichrist*, is recognised even in the secular press, witness the following from an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* some time ago, but true now as it was then: "How is it that in modern Catholic Christianity the worship of the Virgin Mary has superseded the worship of her Son? A form of Christianity in which Jesus Christ has fallen into something lower than a secondary position is extremely surprising; yet it unquestionably exists, and is increasing rather than diminishing in authority and popularity. Let theologians say what they will, nothing is more remarkable in the Gospels than the fewness and obscurity of the references to the mother of Jesus Christ after the story of His birth has been given. Yet it is this shadowy personage who has now dethroned Him, and taken His place. Here we have the one great object of the modern popular *cultus*. It is in her name that miracles are worked; for her statues are erected; round her new dogmas cluster; she alone returns to earth, and to the places of her appearance the modern pilgrims resort in multitudes."[1]

But, when it is thus proved that St. John's description of Antichrist refers not to an infidel but to some who profess to be Christians, Futurists are wont to fall back upon the well-known prophecy of St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians ii., and to assert that at least the description there given must be regarded as belonging to a future infidel Antichrist.

To this it may be answered that if the description given by St. John does not refer to an infidel, neither can that by St. Paul, since it is admitted that they both refer to the same Power, which was to be manifested in the world.

But, apart from this consideration, it can be shown by an examination of that passage itself that the character there described by St. Paul is *not* that of an infidel, but of one who professes Christ, yet by his corrupt doctrine practically acts against Him, and by his exorbitant claims invades the attributes of God Himself

[1] *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 6, 1889.

On the meaning of this important passage of Scripture we cannot do better than to quote Dr. Wordsworth, late Bishop of Lincoln. His evidence is all the more forcible as coming from a High Church prelate, who cannot therefore be suspected of any undue bias against Rome.

We extract the following from a pamphlet entitled, *Is the Papacy Predicted by St. Paul?* And as this little work is now out of print, we may be excused for quoting from it at some length, for his remarks are too good to be lost. The Bishop comments thus on this passage of Thessalonians:—

"As to the correspondence between this Prophecy and the Papacy, be it observed—

"(1) That the first word used to describe what is here pre-announced is ἡ ἀπόστασις, *the falling away* (*v.* 3) or *declension* from the primitive standard of *faith*: *cf.* 1 Timothy iv. 1, where the cognate verb is used with the word *faith.*

"This word indicates a previous profession *of the truth.* For none can fall away from ground on which he did not once stand. It is therefore characteristic of *a corrupt Church.* . . .

"(2) The *declension* of the Papacy from the primitive faith may well be called *the* falling away, because no one system of *apostasy* can be compared with it in long continuity of time, and in wide extent of place.

"(3) The person who is its principal agent is called the '*Son of perdition*' (*v.* 3).

"These words are used as a name in one other place of the New Testament, and are applied (not to an Infidel Power, but) to a *Christian Apostle*, Judas (John xvii. 12). They may therefore be fitly applied to a *Christian Bishop*, a successor of the Apostles, if he betrays Christ. And if the Bishop of Rome be unfaithful to the trust he has received from Christ, they may well be applied to him.

"(4) The *system* described in this prophecy is called a *Mystery.* It is *not* therefore an *Infidel* system. *That* is open and is no mystery. It is also something which purports to be holy. Compare the word *mystery* as used by St. Paul 1 Timothy iii. 9, 16; Ephesians v. 32. It is therefore fitly applied to the religious system of a corrupt Church.

"(5) This *Mystery* is *not* a Mystery of Faith and Godliness (1 Tim. iii. 9, 16), but 'of *Lawlessness*.' Bishop Butler (Serm. v.) calls Popery 'as it is professed at Rome a manifest open usurpation of all human and divine authority.' [1]

"(6) But here it may be objected, How could this power be said to be at work in St. Paul's age? To this it may be replied that St. Paul was inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost can see what *man* cannot see. And he says expressly that what he is describing was *then* a *Mystery*, and was not as yet revealed, but was only working inwardly, and would be revealed in its due season, which was not then come, and which did not arise till some centuries afterwards.

"Besides, when we consider that the whole system of the Papacy, as such, is grounded on the corruptions of human nature, viz., on pride and the lust of power, and on the operations of the Evil One opposing himself to God (as St. Paul declares, *v.* 9) and doing his work by subtlety and spiritual wickedness, who can decline to accept the assertion of the Holy Spirit Himself, that what was afterwards fully revealed was then secretly at work?

"(7) The person in whom this system is embodied is described as ὁ ἀντικείμενος (*v.* 4), *i.e.*, literally, one setting himself in *opposition*, and particularly as a rival *foundation* laid *in the place of* or *against* another foundation. Now be it remembered that St. Paul says, 'other foundation can no one lay, than that which already lieth (κεῖται, mark the word), which is *Jesus Christ*' (1 Cor. iii. 11). May not he, therefore, the Bishop of Rome, who calls *himself the Rock of the Church*, be rightly called ὁ ἀντι-κείμενος?

"(8) The same person is said 'to exalt himself exceedingly against every one who is *called* God' (*v.* 4).

"It has been said, indeed, that this description in verse 4 is not fulfilled in the Papacy, and represents a degree of pride and

[1] The policy of Romanism has ever been first to work in secret, in *mystery*, and then, when the fit time comes, it claims openly the position at which it has aimed. It was the transition of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, which was brought about in the course of the fourth and fifth centuries, that gave impetus to the development of the plans of the Romish Bishops, and became their opportunity for furthering those plans, and for changing *mystery* into *manifestation*. See further on the Papal characteristic of "lawlessness," page 242.

blasphemy far beyond what can be imputed to it. This objection has arisen in a great measure from non-attention to the words of the original. They do *not* import that the 'Man of Sin' exalts himself *above* [as in A.V.] every one that is called God, but that he exalts himself exceedingly *against* [as in *R. V.*] every one that is so called."

As the objection to which Bishop Wordsworth here alludes is a common one, and presents a difficulty to many minds in the way of recognising the fulfilment of the prophecy in the Papacy, it may be well to add a few words of further explanation on this point.

The expression "all that is called God," or, as Wordsworth and other scholars translate it, "every one that is called God," is an unusual one. On the very face of it the phrase seems inapplicable to the Almighty. In the only other place where a similar expression is found, namely in 1 Corinthians viii. 5,—"For though there be *that are called gods*, whether in heaven or on earth, as there be gods many and lords many"— St. Paul distinctly *excludes* the idea of the true God. The Apostle there is alluding to the *so-called gods* of the heathen, and also to the *so-called* gods and lords or dignitaries upon earth, and contrasts them with the one and only true God. The Jews were familiar with this secondary or official meaning of the term "god," and applied it to "magistrates and judges, as God's representatives or vicegerents."[1]

And so, as regards the next object against which Antichrist is said by St. Paul to exalt himself, viz., "all that is worshipped," it has been pointed out by Parkhurst and other high authorities that the term "*sebasma*," meaning an object of worship or vener-

[1] See *Grimm's Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, s. v. Compare our Lord's allusion to this figure of Hebrew speech John x. 34–36. As illustrating this use of the expression, and showing from a Romish source how the prediction has been fulfilled by the Papacy, we may quote the following words of the celebrated Thomas á Becket. Writing to the Bishop of London, he said: "Tell the king that the Lord of men and angels has established two powers, Princes and Priests, the first earthly, the second spiritual: the first to obey, the second to command. *Tell him it is no dishonour to him to submit to those to whom* God Himself defers, calling them gods in the sacred writings." (Hoveden, vol. i. 261; cited by Geikie, *History of the Reformation*, p. 11.)

ation, may apply not only to altars, images, etc., but also to *persons* who set themselves up on a pedestal, as it were, claiming veneration of men. He mentions by way of illustration the Greek title *Sebastos*, corresponding to the Latin *Augustus*, and meaning the Worshipped or Venerated One,—a title applied to the Roman emperors, who were also called by the appellation *god*, in the sense already explained.

Hence we may see that when St. Paul says of the Antichrist that he "exalteth himself against all that is called god or is worshipped," he employs the secondary or official signification of the term "god." And the description means that whatever other dignitaries there are who may thus be figuratively designated, the Antichrist who was to come would exalt himself against them all. He would set up his pretensions against all others. He would place himself on a rival pedestal, as it were, claiming to be the supreme potentate, and to be venerated as *the* Vicegerent of God upon earth.

Does not the history of the Papacy correspond exactly to this description,—showing how it has set itself up against every rival power that claims man's obedience and veneration,—how, at first, only one amongst many Bishops, it gradually exalted itself to be head over all bishops,—how from being one amongst many temporal kingdoms, or "horns" according to Daniel's symbolism, it never rested till it established its claim as supreme over all kingdoms, and as being exalted above the august imperial title claimed by the Germanic emperors?

And even if, with Alford and other interpreters, we were to extend the meaning of opposing and exalting himself "against all that is called God or that is worshipped," so as to include not only inferior objects of human veneration, as we have explained, but also the true God, we should still be justified in applying this description to the Papacy, when we remember that the invasion of God's prerogatives, and the assumption of His titles, must be regarded as an opposition and self-exaltation *against God Himself*, and as *blasphemy* according to the New Testament meaning of that term.[1]

[1] On this point, and on Papal blasphemy, compare what has been said already, p. 132.

Examples of such impious invasions of God's prerogatives abound in Papal history. Take, for instance, the language uttered by the Papal orator at the Lateran Council, and tacitly accepted by the Pope, declaring that in the submission of all nations to Leo was fulfilled the prophecy: "All kings shall fall down and worship Him; all nations shall serve and obey Him." The Pope (for instance, Clement VI.) has even commanded the angels to admit into paradise certain souls without the alleged pains of purgatory. What is all this but the blasphemy of the *Antichrist*, allowing himself to be put *in the place of Christ*, and claiming to act as God?

On page 132 of Erasmus' *Life*, we find it stated as a comment on 1 Timothy i. 6, that among the "vain disputations" of Roman Catholic Theologians of Erasmus' day, 1467–1536, was the following: "Is the Pope man, or is he quasi-God, or has he both natures like Christ?" To such an extent had Papal blasphemy reached during the high-tide of its prosperity!

At this point we cannot refrain from quoting the following eloquent remarks of the late Dr. Gordon, from his volume *Ecce Venit*, in his exposition of St. Paul's prophecy of the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians ii.: "Yet deeper and more dreadful grow the shadows with which inspiration paints the portrait: 'The man of sin, *the son of perdition*.' Only one has borne this latter name, Judas Iscariot, who, with a kiss, betrayed his Lord, and with a 'Hail Master!' on his lips delivered Him to His enemies. And who was Judas that his significant name should be thrown forward upon the coming Antichrist? He was an apostate bishop,—'His bishopric let another take' (Acts i. 20). He was a thief who had the bag, and who, in order to enrich himself, sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Oh appalling counter-reality which we see emerging from the shadows of history! the pontifical bag-bearer, rich with untold treasures purloined from his poor flock, delivering up the Body of Christ evermore to death, as the first betrayer did the head, till the enthroned Redeemer must have groaned again and again, as of old: 'Why persecutest thou Me?' Revolting as it is to our Christian charity to dwell upon these things, we are compelled, in a time when a speculative

interpretation [that of the Futurist school] is joining hands with a sacramental apostasy, to veil the face of Antichrist. Yet, if only once in the ages,—after Waldensian slaughter, or St. Bartholomew's massacre,—we could see this Vicar of Iscariot flinging down his silver and crying, 'I have betrayed the innocent blood,' what haste would we make to throw the mantle of forgetfulness over his ghastly deeds!

"The marks of correspondence between this counter-Christ and the true are most striking at every point. He has his *Parousia* and his *Apocalypse*—his coming and his revelation—as does the Christ. The Son of God enters His earthly career through incarnation,—'Great is the mystery of godliness, He who was manifested in the flesh,'—and the son of perdition does the same: '*The mystery of iniquity* doth already work.' As it was said of the Lord's betrayer, 'Then entered Satan into Judas Iscariot,' so the beginning of this enemy is through a dark, mysterious entering in of the Evil one for corrupting the Church. The mystery of godliness is God humbling Himself to become man; the mystery of iniquity is man exalting himself to become God. The mystery of godliness is loyalty; the Son of God, through the Holy Spirit, rendering perfect obedience to the will and word of the Father: the mystery of iniquity is lawlessness, *anomia*; the son of perdition, through the 'spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,' subverting God's law, and rule, and order in the Church. In the one we see Christ emptying Himself of His glory; in the other we see Antichrist filling himself with his glory, so that he 'opposeth and exalteth himself above [or *against*. See p. 229.] every one called God, or an object of worship,' and 'sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.' How marvellously has this latter prediction been realized! 'Domine Deus!' If but once we heard these words addressed to the Pope by his allowance, it should lead us, as students of prophecy, to ask, 'Art thou he that should come?' What if employed repeatedly and with every variety of adoration? Alexander VI., the Nero of the Pontificate, as he has been called, moving to his consecration, passes under a triumphal arch, on which is inscribed: 'Cæsar was a man; *Alexander is a God*.' Marcellus, in an address to Pope Leo. X., at the fifth Lateran

Council, exclaims, 'Thou art another God on earth'—*tu denique alter Deus in terris.*' . . . These instances of deification, if there were no more, would fill out every line and specification of this Pauline prediction; while that culminating act of 1870—the placing of the crown of infallibility upon the head of the Pope by the Œcumenical Council—would set the attesting seal of literal history to this astonishing word of literal prophecy."

Pastor Chiniquy, once himself an eminent Romish priest, boldly identifies the Papacy with the Man of Sin. He tells us how Rome teaches that a priest, much more the Pope, can by his own will bring down God from heaven on to the altar in the Mass. Blasphemy, in the sense of claiming Divine attributes, and putting himself forward in the character of Christ, still breathes in the utterances of the Pope, and will continue to do so till the final destruction of the Papacy at Christ's coming. Daniel says in his wonderful prophetic vision concerning this Power (chap. vii. 77): "I beheld at that time because of *the voice of the great words* which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain." A remarkable illustration of this is afforded by the present Pope's recent Encyclical *De Unitate*, in which he speaks as follows:—"There is no reason to doubt that all those who, by Divine grace and mercy, have had the happiness to have been born, as it were, in the bosom of the Catholic Church, and to have lived in it, will listen to Our Apostolic Voice—'My sheep hear my voice' (John x. 27)." Then, with regard to those outside the Romish Church, he adds: "What Christ has said of Himself, We may truly repeat of Ourselves—'Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.'" He further makes the following astounding statement, addressed to those "who at least seek to have the true God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, as their Father. Let such as these take counsel with themselves, and realize that *they can in no wise be counted among the children of God*, unless they take Christ Jesus as their Brother, *and at the same time the Church as their mother.*" By the Church here is meant, as the whole Encyclical shows, the Roman Catholic Church headed up in the Pope himself.[1]

[1] The above extracts are from the authorised translation of the Encyclical sent by Cardinal Vaughan to the public papers. The *italics* are ours.

By way of further illustration of this important prediction given by St. Paul to the Thessalonians, we may now quote from the remainder of Bishop Wordsworth's excellent remarks on this passage of Scripture. He observes: "It is further said that 'he exalteth himself against everything that is an object of reverence (*sebasma*), so that he goes into the temple of God and takes his seat there, showing himself that he is God' (*v.* 4).

"The temple (*naos*) of God here is the Church. (See Jerome, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophyl., cited by Bishop Andrewes, c. Bellarm., p. 226.) The action which is specified here, in evidence of his exaltation against every *sebasma*, is that of his session in the *naos* or holy place of the Church of God[1] .

"Is this description applicable to the Roman Pontiff? For an answer to this question let us refer, not to any private sources, but to the official '*Book of Sacred Ceremonies*' of the Church of Rome.

"This book, sometimes called '*Ceremoniale Romanum*,' is written in Latin, and was compiled by Marcellus, a Roman Catholic Archbishop, and is dedicated to Pope Leo X., and was printed at Rome in 1516. Let us turn to that portion of this

[1] Futurists attempt to sustain an objection against this meaning of *naos* as the professed Church. They say that this figurative term in the New Testament means the Church of the *faithful*, and that, therefore, it could not be used of a Church so characterised by error and corruption as that of Rome. It is true that the usual application of the figure in the New Testament is to the Church of the faithful, but that is no reason why it might not be used in this mysterious passage of 2 Thessalonians ii., in the wider sense of the visible Church of professing Christians, as Wordsworth, Alford, Elliott, and other high authorities, besides the early Fathers above mentioned, hold to be the case. The word Church amongst ourselves admits of both these meanings; and Elliott well remarks that the term *naos* is perfectly applicable to a Church which *was once* true, but has *become* apostate. He aptly quotes, by way of illustration, the saying of Christ to the Jews with reference to God's Temple at Jerusalem: "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves" (*Hor. Apoc.*, iii. 98). For the views of the Fathers, see page 237, note.

Moreover, since prophecy tells us that the Jews, as a nation, will remain unconverted till Christ's return, if there were any force in the objection, it would apply in a tenfold degree to the Futurist anticipation of a *naos* rebuilt by Jews who reject Christ altogether, with an infidel Antichrist seated in it,—a theory for which there is no Scriptural foundation.

volume which describes the first public appearance of the Pope at Rome, on his election to the Pontificate.

"We there read the following order of proceeding: 'The Pontiff elect is conducted to the Sacrarium, and divested of his ordinary attire, and is clad in the Papal robes.' But to proceed. Turn again to the '*Ceremoniale Romanum*.' The Pontiff elect, arrayed as has been described, is conducted to the Cathedral of Rome, the Basilica, or *church*, of St. Peter. He is led to the *altar*; he first prostrates himself before it, and prays. Thus he declares the sanctity of the altar. He kneels at it and prays before it, as the seat of God.

"What next ensues? Look at the *Ceremoniale*! 'The Pope rises, and wearing his mitre, is lifted up by the Cardinals, and is placed by them *upon* the *altar* to *sit there*. One of the Bishops kneels, and begins the *Te Deum*. In the meantime the Cardinals *kiss the feet*, and hands and face, of the Pope.'

"Such is the first appearance of the Pope in the face of the Church. This ceremony has been observed for many centuries; and it is commonly called by Roman writers *the Adoration*. It is represented on a coin struck in the Papal mint with the legend, 'Quem creant *adorant*'—'Whom they *create* (Pope), they *adore*."

"The following language was addressed by a Roman Cardinal, Cardinal Colonna, on his knees, to Pope Innocent X., September 15, 1644, and may serve as a specimen of the feelings with which *the Adoration* is performed: 'Most Holy and Blessed Father, Head of the Church, *Ruler of the World*, to whom the keys of the Kingdom of heaven are committed, whom the *Angels in heaven revere*, and whom the gates of hell fear, and whom *all the world adores*, we specially venerate, worship, and *adore thee*, and commit ourselves, and all that belongs to us, to thy paternal *and more than divine* disposal.' (See Banck, *Roma Triumphans*, p. 384. Franeker, 3rd ed., 1656.)

"Next observe the *place* in which this adoration is paid to the Pope. The *temple* of God. The principal temple at Rome, St. Peter's Church [claiming to be the chief centre and symbol of the visible Church of professing Christians]. Observe the attitude of

the Pope when he receives it. He sits. Observe the *place* on which he sits. The *altar* of God.[1]

"Such is the inauguration of the Pope. He is placed by the Cardinals on God's altar. There he sits as on a Throne. The altar is his footstool; and the Cardinals kneel before him, and kiss the feet which tread upon the altar of the Most High.

"The Apostle St. Paul predicted that the fall of the Roman Empire would be succeeded by the rise of a power, *exalting itself exceedingly against all that is called god, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God*—or is conveyed to the sanctuary of God, and there placed to sit—*showing himself that he is God.* Has not this been fulfilled?

"Nor is this all. After the adoration of the Pope sitting on the altar in the Church, another ceremony takes place.

"He is conveyed to the balcony over the portico of St. Peter's Church, and is there crowned with the tiara, or triple crown, in the following terms: 'Receive thou the tiara, adorned with three crowns, and know that thou art the father of Kings and Princes, the *Ruler of the world*, the vicar on earth of Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever. Amen.'"

Such is the testimony of the learned Anglican Bishop Words-

[1] It is necessary to explain here that Bishop Wordsworth does not mean to imply that St. Peter's at Rome is the "temple of God" spoken of by St. Paul. He had said just before of St. Paul's words: "The Temple of God here is the *Church*," and still more distinctly in a previous passage of his book: "It means the *Christian Church*, which is now the only temple of God; and this is the opinion of St. Augustine, St. Chrysostom, and most of the Fathers." The import of the Bishop's words must therefore be that given in brackets above. He emphasises the fact that the claim of St. Peter's at Rome to be the chief local symbol of the visible Church adds force to the illustration of St. Paul's words by the ceremonial described. See what has been said on this already (p. 235). Similarly his expression "the altar of God" can only be rightly understood as meaning that which is put forth by Romanists as such.

For the fact that the "temple" in this passage of Thessalonians means the professed Church of Christ, he quotes the early Father Chrysostom, who says that the "temple" here means "not that at Jerusalem, but *the Churches* everywhere." (Hom. iii. on 2 Thess. ii.) Similarly Theodoret, commenting on the same passage, says: "By the temple of God he meant *the Churches* in which he [Antichrist] will assume the chief place." Irenæus and others adopted the mistaken view of a temple at Jerusalem being meant.

worth on the identification of the Antichrist, as described by St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians ii., with the Papacy. Nor does he let it merely rest on his own authority. He adds: "It may be well to remember that this conclusion is one which is sanctioned by the names of some of the holiest, wisest, most charitable, and judicious persons that have expounded the Word of Inspiration, particularly *Bishop Jewel, Richard Hooker, Bishop Andrewes, and Bishop Saunderson, and the framers of the Authorised English Version of the Holy Bible.*"[1] He also quotes the following resolution of both Houses of Convocation in 1606 (See Cardwell, *Synodalia*, i. 379): "If any man shall affirm that the intolerable pride of the Bishop of Rome, for the time still being, through the advancement of himself by many sleights, stratagems, and false miracles, over the Catholic Church, *the Temple of God, as if he were God Himself*, doth not argue him plainly to be the *Man of Sin*, mentioned by the Apostle, he doth greatly err."[2]

It is necessary to add a few words further on the subject of St. Paul's reference to Antichrist as he that "sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." A recent writer, the author of *The Coming Prince*, has fallen into the great error of supposing, and leading his readers to infer, that it is part of the Historical system of interpretation to maintain that the "temple" alluded to by St. Paul is St. Peter's at Rome. After quoting the above words of St. Paul, in 2 Thessalonians ii. 4, he says, referring to the Historical interpretation: "This means merely, forsooth, that on certain occasions the Pope's seat in St. Peter's is raised above the level of the altar on which the 'consecrated wafer' lies! Such statements—I care not what names may be called in support of them—are an insult to our intelligence and an outrage upon the word of God." Then further in a note he adds: "These teachers ask us to believe that . . . St. Peter's, the

[1] Many other authorities might be added to those mentioned above, such as Sir I. Newton, Bishop Newton, Mr. Elliott, Professor Birks, and, in our own day, Dr. Grattan Guinness, who has ably and conclusively proved the identity of the Papacy with the Antichrist of prophecy, in his various writings, especially in the volume *Romanism and the Reformation from the Standpoint of Prophecy*.

[2] *Is the Papacy predicted by St. Paul?* p. 25.

great central shrine of this apostasy, is owned by God as being *the Temple of God*. . . . Such are the wild extravagancies and puerilities of interpretation and of forecast which mar the writings of these interpreters, that men have come to regard these visions which ought to inspire reverence and awe as 'principal subjects of ridicule'—the speciality of mystics and faddists. How great the need, then, for a united and sustained effort to rescue the study from the contempt into which it has fallen!"[1]

This author's indignation is wasted, because the Historical interpretation does *not* hold that St. Peter's at Rome is the "temple of God" spoken of by St. Paul. On the contrary, the Historical view, as maintained by the highest authorities, is, that the "temple" is here used in a figurative sense, as is common in the New Testament, and that it refers to the professed Church of Christ. They hold that the self-deifying position which the Pope assumes in the professedly Christian Church amply fulfils St. Paul's prophecy that the Man of Sin, or Antichrist, would sit in the Temple of God, showing himself forth as God. Thus Dr. Grattan Guinness speaks of "'the temple of God,' or *Christian Church*, being the chief scene of his ostentation and pride." Elliott proves this meaning in his usual learned and thorough manner.[2]

The author of *The Coming Prince* does not give any authorities for his statement that the Historical view interprets "the temple of God" as St. Peter's at Rome, but he probably refers to Bishop Wordsworth's account of "the Adoration" which we have previously quoted. We have already mentioned that the Bishop holds that "the Christian Church" is what St. Paul meant by "the temple of God" in that passage, and that the further words of the Bishop must be interpreted, in harmony with this, as showing that the scene of "the Adoration" is a remarkable illustration of that passage in 2 Thessalonians ii., as no one who

[1] *The Coming Prince*. Ed. 4, p. 302. We fear that the unfortunate dogmatism of this writer's style, especially when his conclusions are based upon quite mistaken grounds, as in the above instance, will scarcely tend to the union and rescue which he desires.

[2] See *Horæ Apoc.*, vol. iii. p. 98, where further patristic authority is given. We have already enlarged upon this point. See pp. 233, 237.

reads the description can deny. To prevent all mistake, we quote further from the Bishop as follows: "There are about twenty-five passages in the Acts of the Apostles where the Jewish Temple is called *hieron*, but not a single one where it is called *naos* [the word here used by St. Paul], nor is there one in any of the apostolic epistles where it bears this name. The 'temple (*naos*) of God,' in the mouth of an apostle speaking to *Gentile* Christians concerning the future, cannot possibly mean the Jewish Temple, and can only mean the Christian Church."[1]

It was thus explained by the early Fathers, Tertullian, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Theodoret. It is true that some of them,—as for example, Irenæus, Ambrose, and Cyril,—influenced by their view of a personal Antichrist, who they conceived would be a Jew, thought that there was here a prediction that the Temple at Jerusalem would be rebuilt in the last days, and that in this the scene described would take place. We, who have been able in the light of history to view the features of the Man of Sin exactly reproduced in the Papacy, have no excuse for falling into their error, and can see that a figurative meaning of the expression "temple" is what is here intended by the Apostle's words.

The author of *The Coming Prince*, in common with most of the Futurist school, adopts what we hold to be the mistaken idea of the early Fathers above mentioned—namely, that of a rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem, in which the Antichrist is to set up an image of himself. This is constantly assumed, as if it were a matter plainly revealed in Scripture, whereas there is no sure Scriptural basis whatever for any such idea as that of the Temple being rebuilt before Christ comes. The support for that theory, which this author seeks to derive from our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives, is based upon what we have endeavoured to show in our explanation of that Scripture (p. 80, etc.) to be a complete misunderstanding of its meaning.[2]

[1] *Union with Rome*, p. 52. We may add that the late Bishop Lightfoot also assigns a figurative and not literal meaning to the "temple" here spoken of by St. Paul. *Historical Essays*, p. 37.

[2] As regards the question of a rebuilt Temple, Professor Birks, in his commentary on Isaiah, thinks that previous to the coming of Christ, and the erection of the magnificent Temple described by Ezekiel, there will be at least an attempt made by the Jews (who, as we know from prophecy, will

We have already mentioned in a note to our extract from Bishop Wordsworth, at p. 235, Elliott's refutation of the objection that the apostate Church of Rome could not be included under such a term as "the temple of God." He points out that till Christ's rejection by the Jews the Jewish temple, though grievously polluted, might still be called God's temple, as Christ said, "*My house* shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Hence, a Church which professes Christ, and has not rejected a belief in His Divinity, a Church which was once true, but has gradually become apostate, since it has not yet been formally and manifestly cast down by God, may, in the larger sense of the professed Church of Christ, be included under the figurative term used by St. Paul in this prophecy as the sphere of Antichrist's blasphemous ostentation.

Moreover, we also noticed that the objection would lie equally against a rebuilt Temple, since prophecy shows that the partial

have returned to the Holy Land in large numbers in an unconverted state) to restore the old lifeless and corrupt Pharisaism and to rebuild the Temple. He thinks that this is what is implied in the obscure passage, Isaiah lxvi. 1:—"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?"

But it is to be noted that the Revised Version reads: "What manner of house will ye build unto Me?" and when this is taken in connection with the whole context, the language seems like a repudiation by God of a *plan* or *intention* to rebuild the Temple. It speaks of it as a thing *proposed* rather than *accomplished*. Professor Cheyne says: "The words need not mean more than an emphatic declaration that Jehovah 'dwelleth not in houses made with hands.'" *The Speaker's Commentary* also takes this view. In the sixth verse of that chapter, which, as we see by verse 15, etc., certainly refers to the same last great crisis that is foretold in Zechariah xiv., there seems, at first sight, to be a reference to the Temple, as if it were in some form existing. The words are: "A voice of tumult from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to her enemies." Cheyne says these words might refer either to the *Temple site*, or to a rebuilt Temple. The former is quite sufficient to meet the requirements of this brief poetic allusion. Or, in case of the above-mentioned possibility of a Temple planned, or begun, it might refer to that. Ezekiel's mysterious prophecy, chapters xl.–xlvi., is the only definite prediction about a rebuilt Temple, and this is *after* Christ's coming. Ezekiel's prophecies are often characterised by a mixture of the ideal with the real. If sacrifices at Jerusalem are to be literally restored in the Millennium, it can only be as a kind of object lesson at that great centre of former sacrifices, illustrating *retrospectively* what was their true meaning.

return of the Jews to Palestine, which is to be accomplished before the return of Christ, and which is now going on, will be in *a state of unconversion*, the completed return, and the conversion of the whole Hebrew nation, not taking place till after the coming of Christ. Hence, if the Temple were to be rebuilt before that event, it would be a Temple owned and built by those who reject Christ.[1]

We may add to the foregoing explanation a few remarks on two other conspicuous characteristics in St. Paul's description of the Man of Sin (in 2 Thess. ii.) which find their exact fulfilment in the Papacy.

We read that his "coming [marg., *presence*] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." Alford, commenting on this, well points out that the epithet "lying," or "of falsehood," qualifies all three substantives, and that "the varieties of his manifested power, and signs, and wonders, all have falsehood for their base, and essence, and aim." He shows that the further words of the description, "with all *deceit of unrighteousness* for them that are perishing," mean that such things and such teaching "belong to and lead to unrighteousness." How true this is of the Papal system must be admitted by all who are acquainted with the working of the Confessional and the teaching of the Jesuits. Wherever the light of God's Word is withheld, or its teaching perverted, darkness and unrighteousness must be the result.

We have already given examples of the deceiving miracles which have been a characteristic of the Papal Antichrist throughout his career.[2] We may add here some excellent remarks by an able writer in a religious review: "Popery maintains that the power to work miracles is one of the essential and abiding marks of the true Church. In making such a claim they are witnesses for God that Popery is the Man of Sin, the Antichrist; for the Man of Sin was professedly to be a miracle worker, and Popery is the only great outstanding, permanent, historical form of

[1] The question of the return of the Jews will be found further noticed at page 358.

[2] See page 151.

Christian religion which claims to be endowed with the power of working miracles." Thus the "coming" or "presence" of this power on the scene of the world was truly foretold by St. Paul as being accompanied "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders."

The other characteristic to be noticed is "lawlessness," or "disregard of law." St. Paul here speaks of the Antichrist as "the lawless one." This is further explained by what Daniel says of this same power in his vision of the four Beasts: "He shall think to change the times and the law."[1] The expression, therefore, denotes one who claims to supersede laws human and Divine, to order all things according to his own pleasure, and thus to be above all law. Now let us see how exactly this description has been fulfilled in the Papacy. Pope Nicholas issued the following astonishing statement concerning the powers of the Pope: "He can change the nature of things. . . . He can even make something out of nothing. . . . He can *change injustice into righteousness.* He can *correct the laws of States, and alter them altogether*; and, by the plenitude of his power, he can, *since he is above all law*, dispense from every law." Could any identification be more complete? Daniel foretells that the Antichrist will claim to *change laws at his will.* Paul describes him as "*the lawless one*," who disregards all law. And the Pope, declaring himself to be "*above all law*" and "free from all laws," proclaims the Papacy as the fulfilment of the prophecy.[2]

In comparing the foretold characteristics of the Antichrist with their fulfilment in the Papacy, it is always necessary to bear in mind what we have noted before, namely, that the prophetic portraiture is a picture of the Papacy *during the plenitude of its power and in the zenith of its career.* And just as an artist would portray the antlers of a stag, not in their budding stage,

[1] Daniel vii. 25.

[2] See *Approaching End of the Age*, pp. 190–192. We may add the following from the *Acts and Monuments* by Fox: "Wherefore no marvel if it be in my power *to change time and times*, to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, *yea, with the precepts of Christ*" (Cited in *Approaching End of the Age*, p. 192). It is remarkable how Papal utterances identify the Pope with Antichrist by using the exact words of Scripture which describe that power in Daniel vii. 25, as quoted above.

nor yet in a broken or decrepit condition, but with all the branches in their strength and maturity, so the "horn" of the Papacy is depicted on the page of God's prophetic Word as it appeared before the world in the time of its maturity, with its various characteristics most fully developed.

We may conclude our quotation from Bishop Wordsworth by noticing the surprise which he expresses, that such an objection can be raised as that which has come from some quarters, namely, that "because many of the Popes have been good and noble and holy men, therefore the Papacy could not have been described in such terms as are used by St. Paul."

To this the Bishop well replies: "The question is not what some of the Popes may have been personally as individuals, but what the principles and tendencies of the Papacy are *as a system*. . . . The Roman Pontiff, in his official and corporate character, being the representative and organ of the Papal system, in its unscriptural and uncatholic, in its antiscriptural and anticatholic acts and dogmas, and being identified with those acts and dogmas, is, in the eye of the Holy Spirit, the Lawless one described by St. Paul. . . .

"St. Paul was inspired by the Holy Ghost. To the eye of the Holy Spirit evils may appear far more evil than they appear to us; especially may corruptions of doctrine and worship in a Christian Church have a far more heinous and deadly aspect in His eyes than ours. He sees all their enormities at one view in their proper light, and in all their bearings and ultimate results, even for Eternity.

"He not only saw at one glance what the Papacy *is*, and *has been* for many centuries, but what it *may yet become* before it is *destroyed* by the *Second Advent* of Christ.

"If, therefore, the conclusions above stated are true, then the application of the prophecy to the Papacy cannot be set aside by any subjective notions on *our* part as to the moral or religious guilt of the Church of Rome.

"On the contrary, the strength of the denunciatory language of the Holy Spirit on this subject must be regarded as a guide to regulate *our* judgment upon the Papacy, and as designed by the Holy Spirit to convey a warning proportionate in solemnity and

awfulness to the strength of the language employed by Him to describe it."[1]

These are weighty words, and deserve the serious consideration both of Futurists and of Romanists, and also of that increasing number of professing Christians in the Church of England, who in ritual and doctrine are gradually but steadily becoming more and more assimilated to Rome.

Some Historical interpreters think that the great Antichrist of the Papacy, though it has all along claimed to be a power from God, and has based its pretensions on God's Word as well as tradition, wresting the Scriptures for its own purpose, will, in its final stage, sink into absolute infidelity, and openly repudiate both God and His Word. Bishop Wordsworth himself seems inclined to this view. A remarkable incident which occurred during the French Revolution,—an epoch admitted to be a kind of foretaste of the troubles of the last days,—has been cited by way of illustration of such a possibility. The incident is related as follows in *The Students' France*, one of Murray's well-known historical Manuals for Students, chapter xxvii., § 5, pp. 559–60 :—

"Hebert and other ultra-democrats made a furious assault on the Christian religion, the very profession of which they determined to root out from France, well knowing it to be the foundation of all morality and social order. By their instigation a petition to this effect was presented to the Convention by Gobel, the 'constitutional' Bishop of Paris, and his clergy, who publicly renounced their belief and functions as ministers of the Catholic Church, and declared that henceforth they would recognise no public worship but that of liberty, equality, and reason. A decree was forthwith passed in accordance with this appalling act of apostasy."

It would be rash to deny that history may repeat itself, and that some incident similar to this may happen again in the time of the Great Tribulation in which this dispensation is to close, for infidelity is a common reaction from superstition both among priests and laymen. But the abjuring of the Roman Catholic

[1] *Is the Papacy predicted by St. Paul?* An Inquiry, by Bishop Wordsworth, pp. 17–27.

religion in favour of atheism by some renegade priests, which is all that the above incident amounts to, is a very different thing from the open adoption of Atheism by the Papal system with the Pope at its head. The Pope professes to hold his commission from God, and bases his claim for supremacy, partly on the Scriptures, and partly on tradition, as the successor of Peter. Apart from this he has no *locus standi*. A Papacy that renounces God and the Scriptures would be no Papacy at all. In fact, the idea of a professedly infidel Pope involves such contradictions and improbabilities that it is impossible to put it forward as a thing likely to happen; nor is such a theory required by the language of Scripture, as we have endeavoured to show.[1]

We would submit that the true view of the relations between the Papacy and infidelity, both at present and in the future, is rather that which has recently been put forward by a French writer, namely, *a common hatred against the pure Gospel.* The French press is largely in the hands of Rome, and has been taking up the chorus of accusation against the patriotism of French Protestants. Referring to this, in a late issue of *L'Echo de la Verité*, M. Saillens writes: "It is easy to see what is hidden behind this campaign against Evangelical and active French Protestantism. The Roman Church no longer has much fear of Freethought. She knows full well that sooner or later a Freethinking country will return to her. But she dreads above everything the Evangelical propaganda. With the penetration of hatred, she knows perfectly how to discern under the unpretentious appearance of our efforts of evangelisation a formidable danger to Popery, a danger more formidable than all the anti-clerical leagues put together. *As an accomplice in the war which she wages she now has Freethought itself.* As a fact, unbelievers and indifferent people, those for whom the present life is everything, prefer Roman Catholicism to the Gospel." And in view of the possible

[1] It is thought by some that the reading, "*and* the beast," in Revelation xvii. 16, associating the Beast with the kingdoms in the spoliation of the Harlot, or Church of Rome, favours this view. We have shown, however, that there is no necessity for adopting that reading, but rather that the most ancient evidence points to the reading "*upon* the beast," and assigns the action of spoiling the Harlot to the *kingdoms*, and not to the Beast. (See p. 194.)

further co-operation in the future for practical purposes between the Papacy and infidelity, in order to crush out Evangelical truth, their common foe, the same writer adds: "May God spare us trials; but if it be His will that we should pass through the furnace, may He prepare us to suffer with patience, love, and fidelity."[1]

Thus though the Papacy may ally itself with infidelity in a common onslaught against Evangelical truth which it hates, we believe that it will do so whilst still professing the Name of Christ, even as it has already perpetrated in that Name the infamous deeds of cruelty recorded in history, such as the fires of martyrdom, the massacre of the Huguenots, and the horrors of the Inquisition.

In conclusion, we would say with regard to this point of detail, that it must carefully be borne in mind that even if any one should prefer to follow Bishop Wordsworth and others, in the anticipation of the possibility of an openly infidel Pope at the end of this dispensation, such a theory in no way interferes with the truth which we have endeavoured to make clear, and which has been so amply demonstrated by that learned prelate himself in the passages we have quoted at length from him, namely, that the *Antichrist of prophecy is the Papacy headed up in the Pope.* The Papacy rose into prominence at the very crisis in the world's history at which, under the symbolism of the remarkable *little horn* springing up amongst the ten, Daniel had foretold that the Antichrist would appear, namely, when the Roman Empire should become subdivided into separate kingdoms, which took place at the time of the fall of the old Western Roman Empire. The same point of time for the appearance of the Antichrist was foretold by St. John in the Revelation with still more distinctness and detail, as we have endeavoured to show in our explanation of the Beast, or Roman Empire, under its last headship. This same point of time was also indicated by St. Paul in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, where he speaks of the removal of the *hindrance*, "one that restraineth," after which the Man of Sin, or Antichrist, was to be revealed, the *hindrance* meaning, as

[1] Quoted in the *Christian* of June 15, 1893.

we have shown, the removal of the Cæsars from Rome in order that the Popes might hold sway there.[1]

Since, therefore, from the very nature of the case, it is obvious that this crisis of history, namely, the breaking up of the old Western Roman Empire into the various kingdoms of Europe, and the removal of the Cæsars from Rome, cannot possibly be repeated, and since the Papacy, which thus appeared at the crisis predicted for the appearance of the Antichrist bears all the marks of the Antichrist, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the Papacy, and not some future individual, *is the Antichrist of prophecy*, whose manifestation upon the scene of the world was predicted by Daniel, Paul, and John. In its essence, as a spirit of lawlessness or self-will, and of antagonism to the truth of Christ, it was working "in mystery" in the days of St. Paul and St. John, as we learn from their epistles. At the crisis of the fall of the Roman Empire, when the hindrance of the Cæsars was removed from Rome, it began to work no longer in mystery, but in manifestation, and appeared openly as the despotism of the Cæsars revived in a new form at Rome in the person of the Pope. It had run its course of prosperity, the mystically expressed period of 1,260 years, when the Temporal Power fell in 1870. Shorn of the Temporal Power, but nevertheless possessing world-wide influence, it exists still, and will continue to do so, with what further development the future may bring, until it is finally destroyed at the coming of Christ.

Further, if this be so—if the crisis for the appearance of the Antichrist is past and cannot be repeated,—since there is now no consolidated Roman Empire, like that of old, that can be broken up into separate kingdoms, nor are there any Cæsars ruling at Rome to be "taken out of the way,"—it should also be evident that those students of prophecy are in the wrong who, in the hope of bringing about a reconciliation of views, try to make out that the Futurist and the Historical systems of interpretation are *both* right, and speak of a double fulfilment of the Antichrist of prophecy—one in the past, that of the Papacy; and another in the future, in the brief career of some supernatural individual. *The* Antichrist—the Antichrist foretold by Daniel, Paul and John

[1] See p. 187.

in all its minute and complicated detail—*has* appeared at the very time predicted.

The most that can be allowed, if the evidence that has been brought forward be accepted as proving the identity of the Papacy and the Antichrist, as we trust it will be by our readers, is what we have before stated—namely, the possibility of a further *illustration* of the evils of the Papal Antichrist by some remarkable individual, perhaps, as some think, the last Pope, who, in his own person and actions shall exhibit some of the chief characteristics of the great Papal Antichrist of which he will be the last representative.

Such a theory, if it be held at all by any one, should be held with modesty and caution, not with dogmatic positiveness; always remembering what has been previously pointed out—namely, that such an individual, if he should appear, will not be the Antichrist of prophecy, since that is the Papacy and no other, but only an *after illustration* of the Antichrist, in the same sense as Antiochus Epiphanes, or Nero, were previous illustrations.

We would submit, therefore, that the Futurist interpretation, as presented ably and succinctly in the *Abstract*, to which reference has been made in the preceding pages, is fundamentally wrong; and that the prophecy of *the eighth head of the Beast*—in other words, the Antichrist—in the Revelation, is not to be regarded as a literal description of the brief career of some future individual, but is a symbolic prediction of the long and baneful career of the Papacy, the greatest enemy of the truth that has ever sprung up within the professed Church of Christ.

We would further submit that the same fundamental error of ultra-literalism underlies the whole system of Futurist interpretation, and leads them to regard the mass of the book of Revelation as consisting of literal descriptions of utterly improbable events which they assert will occur in the future in connection with the career of the supernatural individual whom they expect. We have already mentioned instances of the extravagances to which such a system of interpretation logically leads, such as their anticipation that it is to rain blood, or that a meteor is to strike the sea and turn it into blood, or that the rivers and springs likewise are to become literal blood.

As a sample of such interpretation we quote the evidence of a popular Futurist writer, who says, referring to the judgment of the second Vial: "The whole sea is affected, and a change is wrought which makes all its waters like to the blood of one dead —clotted, putrescent, and utterly destructive of the life of what lives in the sea." So, again, of the third Vial he writes: "Under the third Trumpet a third of the rivers became nauseous and noxious with bitterness; but *this* plague touches them *all*, and turns them into blood, so that the hosts of Antichrist can find nothing to drink but blood. A more dreadful plague can hardly be imagined, but it is just!"

Moreover, they tell us that the vision of the fifth Trumpet means that some time in the future the air will be filled with extraordinary "winged creatures. . . . The horse, the man, the lion, and the scorpion combined in them." These creatures are to be a sort of gigantic locust, and for the space of five months are to fly about, horrifying and tormenting every one who has not the seal of God by some mark or other stamped upon his forehead.[1]

We have already noticed the setting up of the talking image, and the literal branding of the foreheads or hands of mankind, which the Futurist system of literal interpretation would lead us to expect; and it needs no more to show the extravagances which are involved in that system when logically carried out to its conclusions.

The more cautious writers of this school, however, do not attempt to explain the application of their system to the book of Revelation in all its detail. They dwell chiefly on the subject of the individual Antichrist whom they expect. As to the mass of the visions in the book, they deal with them by the easy method of throwing them forward into the future, and confidently stating that they will one day take place somehow or other, ever falling back upon their favourite maxim that "God means what He says."

[1] Dr. Seiss on the Revelation, pp. 229, 468, 245. See what has already been said on this subject in our Introduction, p. 6. The contrast between the two systems will be brought out further in the explanation of the threefold series of visions—the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials—which will be given later on.

This latter assertion is, of course, perfectly true, but only so if we add the further equally important maxim that God means us to *understand what He says*, and to distinguish whether He speaks in the language of direct and literal prophecy, with which His Word abounds; or whether, for purposes of His own, He speaks in indirect and figurative language, and veils His prophecy in symbolism, such as is frequent in the Psalms and Prophets, and more especially in the apocalyptic books of Daniel and the Revelation.

The Historical system, which we are endeavouring to substantiate in these pages, holds that the various series of visions comprising the mass of the book of Revelation—the Seals, the Trumpets, the Woman and the Red Dragon, the Beasts, and the Vials—are presentations in *symbolic* form, facts of history prefigured to St. John in symbolic visions which passed before him; and that, by following the hints furnished in the Revelation itself, as well as in other parts of Scripture, for the right understanding of symbols, they can be shown to refer to events which were to occur in the Church and in the world throughout the whole course of this dispensation, and the greater part of which have been already fulfilled. It is a system which shirks no difficulties, but gives a logical and consistent interpretation of the whole series of visions in all their minute details, some points of course being less clearly discernible than others, which is only what might be expected when dealing with complex prophecies, wrapped up in mysterious symbolic terms and presented by means of visions. It is a system, moreover, which enables us to determine our present position on the chart of time (as we hope to show more fully when we come to the explanation of the Vials), and thus to form an idea of what is immediately before us, as well as of what is in the more remote future.

Mistaken and distorted views of prophecies are often occasioned by taking them piecemeal, so to speak, instead of embracing a comprehensive view. The right proportion of parts, and their true position and meaning, can only be perfectly apprehended by studying them in relation to the whole.

It should be noted that in showing the Papacy to be the Antichrist it is not intended to deny that there are other anti-

christs now in the world, even as there were "many antichrists" in St. John's time, as he mentions in his Epistles. Infidelity, Mahommedanism, Buddhism, in fact all false religions may be regarded as so many antichrists. But *the Papacy* is that particular form of antichristianity which, *above all others, has been selected by Divine foreknowledge to be the subject of prophecy*, for a warning to the Church of Christ, as being her most insidious and formidable enemy, which, by ceaseless machinations and with undying hatred of Gospel truth, would, as Daniel and John foretold, "wear out the saints of the Most High."

CHAPTER IV

ON SOME FUTURIST CRITICISMS CONCERNING THE HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE TIME OF THE END AND OF THE FULFILMENT OF THE ANTICHRIST IN THE PAPACY

We have previously had occasion to notice the fact that strong assertions, in the case of some writers on prophecy, are frequently put forward in the place of solid arguments. We have given some instances of this; but it may be well to show further how such writers are sometimes led, doubtless not intentionally, into very grave misrepresentations.[1]

In the volume entitled, *The Coming Prince,* which is concerned chiefly with the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, and from which we have already quoted, there is the following criticism on the historical system of interpretation, and on Elliott, as the exponent of it: "Finally, he [*i.e.* Elliott] drifts upon the rock on which every man who follows this false system must inevitably be wrecked—the *chronology* of prophecy." This is a strange assertion in which this critic assumes the *rôle* of a prophet. Many of the chronological periods in prophecy interpreted according to the Historical system, so far from being wrecked, have been strikingly verified in the past, as we are showing in this volume, while others have still to run out; and with regard to these latter, of course, it remains to be seen whether they will be wrecked or not.

He proceeds to speak of Elliott as "proving by cumulative evidence that the year 1865 would usher in the Millennium; or if

[1] As already mentioned, the Futurist writers from whom we have principally quoted in these pages have been selected as being amongst the most prominent of recent authors belonging to that school.

not 1865, then 1877, or 1882 (*Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iii., pp. 256–266)." [1]

Before endeavouring to show how utterly mistaken and misleading this statement is, it may be well to mention an instance connected with the chronology of prophecy which is *not* alluded to by this critic—an instance in which Mr. Elliott's prophetical anticipation, instead of being shipwrecked, received a most remarkable fulfilment. Elliott showed that since there were two commencing epochs of the 1260 years of the Beast's prospering, or of Papal supremacy—namely, that of Justinian's recognition of the Pope as the head of Roman Christendom, A.D. 529–533, and the further and more complete recognition by Phocas, A.D. 606–608—so, corresponding to these two epochs of the *rise* of the Papacy, there would be two epochs marking its *decline*.[2] After noticing how remarkably this view was confirmed by the occurrence of that tremendous blow to the Papacy, the epoch of the French Revolution, which took place just about 1260 years from Justinian's recognition of the Pope, and so formed the *earlier* epoch of termination, Elliott (writing in 1861, be it remembered, several years before the event) suggests that this fulfilment should "prepare us for anticipating with increased assurance a second and more complete epoch of termination at the expiration of 1260 years, as measured from the *second* and *later* epoch of commencement."[3] Now 1260 years from this second epoch of commencement of which Elliott wrote—namely, the recognition of the Papacy by Phocas, A.D. 606–608—terminated in 1866–1868, —*the very period that set in motion the train of great events in Europe which issued in the downfall of the temporal power in* 1870.

What more remarkable confirmation of the general truth of the Historical system could there be than this forecast *based upon that system*, and thus strikingly *verified by events*? This second and greater blow marked in a most conspicuous manner the fact that the epoch of the end of the domineering power of the Papacy

[1] *The Coming Prince*, p. 266. Fourth Edition.
[2] *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iii., p. 298, etc. Fifth Edition.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 305.

over the kingdoms of Europe, or the prospering of the Beast, as Elliott calls it, had set in. As such it was commented upon in the papers of the day. The gravity of the blow to Papal prestige was recognised by Romish writers and by the utterances from the Vatican. Nor does the fact that, after this blow to the temporal power, the spiritual power of the Papacy still lasts on, and, in an indirect manner, still continues to exercise much political influence in the world, in any way interfere with the remarkable verification of Elliott's forecast, or with the truth of the Historical interpretation of prophecy concerning the Papal Antichrist. Such a lingering on of vitality until the final extinction at the coming of Christ is indicated in prophecy, and was anticipated by Elliott, as also by Bishop Wordsworth and others. Elliott lived to see his words which we have quoted come true; and, writing in 1871, only a few months before his death, after noticing the tremendous blow the Papacy had just received, he adds: "Yet the words of the Papal 'great mouth' are still boastful and blasphemous as ever! Advance seems surely to be making . . . to the final and most awful destruction of the Papal Antichrist 'by the brightness of the Lord's coming,' after having been previously 'consumed and wasted by the breath of His mouth.'"[1]

In answer to the common objection brought against the Historical system, that many mistaken calculations have been made, we have previously (p. 142) pointed out that, if a difficult problem were set for examination it would be no argument for the impossibility of solving that problem that many wrong answers were given; but, rather, those who answered correctly would be commended and held up as examples to be followed.

As Elliott's anticipations with regard to the beginning of the Millennium, which are the object of the above-mentioned criticism, have special reference to the prophecy concerning the "time of the end" in Daniel xii., a brief glance at that passage of Scripture will help us to understand the ground upon which Elliott based his conclusions. The angel's words in Daniel xii. 11, 12,

[1] *Hor. Apoc.* Fifth Edition, vol. i., second preface. On more than one crisis of beginning and decline compare what has already been said, p. 144.

are as follows: "And from the time that the continual burnt offering shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (R.V.).

Obviously a veil of great mystery is thrown over this prediction, and the utmost modesty and caution is needed in seeking the explanation. These two periods of 1290 and 1335 years (for, as we have shown, according to the Historical system of interpretation, *days* stand for *years* in this and similar symbolically expressed prophecies) are generally admitted to have the same starting-point as the "time, times, and a half" previously mentioned in the seventh verse of the chapter. And this latter formula, as appears by comparison with the same period in other symbolical prophecies, is equivalent to 1260 *days*, or prophetic *years*. Hence it would appear that according to the angel's prediction there were to be three marked stages in the "time of the end"—namely, at the close of 1260, 1290, and 1335 years respectively, all dating from the same starting-point, and that the interval between the beginning of this whole "time of the end" and its completion would be seventy-five years.

Now it is true that in his earlier editions, from which the critic quotes, Elliott was led to suggest that since the two commencing epochs of the 1260 years of the Papal Antichrist, or "the Beast's prospering," as he expresses it—namely, the recognition of the supremacy of the Pope by Justinian and that by Phocas—were seventy-five years apart, and since their epochs of termination would, therefore, similarly be seventy-five years apart, it might be possible that the mysterious additional seventy-five years after the 1260, mentioned in Daniel xii. as reaching to the time of blessedness, might refer to this very interval between the two terminations. And, if so, then, since the first epoch of termination, dating the 1260 years of Papal prospering from Justinian, ran out in 1789–1793, when the blow of the French Revolution fell, and the second epoch of termination would run out about 1866–1868, Elliott, writing many years before this date, thought this latter epoch might possibly prove to be the time of blessedness spoken of—in other words, the beginning of the Millennium.

But, even so, that cautious and learned author expressly guarded himself against being supposed to speak with any degree of confidence and certainty. With regard to his calculation just mentioned, concerning the epoch of termination of the mysterious seventy-five additional years spoken of by Daniel, he adds the important reservation, "if we may rest at all on so obscure a prophecy." Even in his earliest editions Elliott spoke of "partial doubtfulness" and of "other possible epochs of commencement." Whence he was led to conclude in a cautious manner that the various periods "have all a probable ending somewhere within the extreme dates of A.D. 1790 and 1914.[1]

In his second edition, after mentioning that Mohammedanism might perhaps be the "abomination of desolation" spoken of in Daniel xii. 11, and so be the starting-point of the periods there mentioned, he extends the final date till possibly about 1941.[2]

In his fifth and last edition he expressly points out that the supplementary period of seventy-five years spoken of in Daniel xii. might "very possibly" be reckoned, not from the first, but from *the second and more complete* termination of the 1260 years of the Papal period, or time of the Beast's prospering—that is to say, from the epoch of 1866–1868, when the great blow of the downfall of the Temporal Power began to be set in motion, as has been already explained. And, further than this, he added:—"There is this obvious and strong presumption in favour of this measurement, that it is most natural." The result of this calculation, therefore, to which Elliott evidently inclined, would be that the 1260, 1290, and 1335 years of Daniel xii. would correspond with the several epochs of 1866–1868, when the Temporal Power began to fall, 1896–1898, and 1941–1943, and that the supplementary period of seventy-five years would thus fill in the interval between the first and last of these three dates, while the last date might prove to be the beginning of the Millennium, or "time of blessedness" of which Daniel spoke, if this were the true interpretation of the mystic periods.[3]

[1] Vol. iii., p. 1429. First edition.

[2] Vol. iv., p. 168. Second edition.

[3] The above references to Elliott's fifth edition are Vol. iii., p. 304, and Vol. iv. p., 238. This, his last edition, was published in 1862. For the reference

Thus cautiously did Elliott express himself concerning this mysterious subject. The reader can now judge for himself of the criticism by the author of *The Coming Prince*, in which he speaks of Elliott as "proving by cumulative evidence that the year 1865 would usher in the Millennium, or if not 1865, then 1877, or 1882."

It should be observed that the Historical system of interpretation is by no means tied to all Elliott's conclusions, as some Futurists seem to consider. We are indebted to him, as pre-eminent in a list of illustrious writers, such as Mede, Sir I. Newton, Professor Birks, and, in our own day, Dr. Grattan Guinness, for the most learned and complete identification of the Antichrist of prophecy with the Papal Apostasy, and also for unfolding the deep historical meaning of the series of other symbolical visions in the Apocalypse. In some points of detail his conclusions may require modification and revision; and doubtless Elliott himself, were he now living, would be first to admit this, since the science of the interpretation of prophecy, like other sciences, is *progressive*. But we submit that the above criticism, as shown by our extracts, is clearly a misrepresentation of his views, and likely to mislead those who are trying for themselves to discover which is the true method of interpreting God's prophetic Word.[1]

As regards the question of assigning any date as possible or probable for the beginning of Christ's glorious Millennial reign, there is the utmost need of humility and caution. To foretell confidently some particular year, as has been done in some quarters, is only to bring discredit upon prophecy. But we may almost say that it is equal folly to refuse to look into the chronological question at all, and to shut our eyes to the signs of

of the "abomination of desolation" in Daniel xii. to the Mohammedan power, which Elliott also recognises, see p. 56 of the present volume.

[1] We would not for a moment be understood to imply that such misrepresentation was intentional. It can only have arisen, either from misunderstanding or from want of proper care in ascertaining what were Elliott's conclusions. But it is necessary, both for the cause of truth and for the vindication of that great writer, that the matter should be set forth in its true light, and that such a statement, calculated to prejudice readers against the truth of the Historical system, should not be allowed to pass uncorrected.

the times in which we are living, a fault for which our Lord rebuked the men of His own generation. It is unquestionable that history has thrown much light upon the prophetic page, and the advance of time has brought advance of knowledge concerning the meaning of these mysteries. More especially might this be expected to be the case as the time of the end draws near. If these periods in Daniel are given to us like other prophecies as "a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawn," "whereunto we do well that we take heed," as St. Peter tells us, we are justified in making what use we can of that light, though our anticipations should rather take the form of suggestions of possibility than of certain calculations, and our attitude should be that of cautious and watchful expectancy, rather than that of definite and confident prediction.

Moreover, with regard to the subject of the time of the Second Advent, it is most necessary to remember the distinction in point of time between the coming of Christ *for* His saints, which is what St. Paul enlarges upon in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, and the coming *with* His saints, which is the conspicuous topic in his Second Epistle. Unless this distinction is borne in mind it is impossible to maintain the habit of mind enjoined by our Lord upon all believers—namely, that of looking for His return as possible at any moment, or at least of believing that it may be close at hand; for this is the only logical inference from His words "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. . . . Watch, therefore, for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

That this was the attitude of the Early Christians has been clearly pointed out by Alford in his Commentary in many passages. For example, in St. Paul's exhortation to Timothy to "Keep the commandment . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,"[1] he remarks:—"We may fairly say that whatever impression is betrayed by the words that the coming of the Lord would be in Timothy's lifetime is chastened and corrected by the words

[1] 1 Timothy vi. 14.

'*in His own season*' of the next verse. The certainty of the coming in God's own time was a fixed truth respecting which the Apostle speaks with the authority of the Spirit, but the day and the hour was hidden from him as from us: and from such passages we see that the apostolic age maintained that which ought to be the attitude of all ages—constant expectation of the Lord's return."

A comparison of Scripture shows, as we have said, that Christ's coming will be in two stages, first *for* His saints, and then, after an interval, *with* them. He will come *for* His saints to take them up into the air, to be "ever with the Lord," *before* He comes to the earth *with* them, to overthrow His enemies and to set up His kingdom. How long before we do not know, and therefore we are to live as those who believe that the first stage of His coming may possibly be close at hand. It was indeed indicated by St. Paul in the first two chapters of his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians that the second stage—namely, Christ's coming *with* His saints—could not be till after Antichrist should have run his career, and the Great Tribulation should have taken place; but no clear revelation is given in Scripture of any great event in the world during this dispensation that must take place before Christ's coming *for* His saints. There are some hints which seem to indicate it might be after a long time, others seem to denote it might be near. Hence uncertainty, and, therefore, as the right attitude, expectation. It will not be till the second stage that the power of Antichrist and every other form of error and dominion of evil will be utterly overthrown, and Christ's reign of peace will begin.[1]

As another example of Futurist criticism we may notice that the author of *The Great Prophecies*, in a small pamphlet on the Seventy Weeks of Daniel, from which we have previously quoted, brings forward the usual arguments of Futurists in support of their interpretation of that prophecy, which arguments, in the course of our exposition, we have endeavoured to show to be utterly erroneous and misleading. But he further makes the

[1] The Scripture evidence for the coming in two stages is well set forth in a small book, *The Second Advent*, by Dr. Stevenson.——We shall explain the point more fully later on. See page 381.

following strange suggestion, at p. 11, concerning the individual Antichrist whom they expect, and whom, as we have pointed out, they mistakenly bring in at the close of Daniel's Seventy Weeks:—"He will, probably, establish his claim to Divinity by descending in the sight of the people, from the pediment of the Temple, being borne upon the wings of demons; and will thus yield to the temptation which the Christ resisted, and satisfy the hypocritical Jews with a sign from heaven."(!) This strange idea he repeats in *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries*, p. 356. In the pamphlet already mentioned he thus sums up the Futurist view of the Seventy Weeks which he has been setting forth:—"Such seems to be the only fair way of interpreting this clue to all other prophecies of Israel or the Church: *certainly it is the only one worth notice which has been yet proposed.*" This is an amazing statement, and, as an example of the dogmatic presumption of Futurist criticism, can scarcely be surpassed;—as though learned and standard works, by such distinguished authors as Sir I. Newton, Professor Birks, Dr. Pusey, Mr. Elliott, Dr. Guinness, and others of the Historical school, giving quite a different interpretation to the prophecy, on the lines we have followed in these pages, were not "worth notice"! [1]

It is painful to have to speak thus of Futurist writers, whose intentions we admit to be good, and who doubtless believe that they are serving the cause of truth. It is necessary, however, to draw attention to this point, because it is probable that it is owing to this positive style of writing that Futurism largely prevails amongst a class of readers who are unable, from want of time, or of the necessary materials for doing so, to form an independent judgment, and to test for themselves the worth of the dogmatic assertions with which such views are propounded.

Many who read the books and pamphlets numerously cir-

[1] The above quotation may be matched by the following from a second pamphlet by the same author:—"It would be useless to discusss the puerile attempts of some expounders to make out a fulfilment of the Seventieth Seven at the epoch of the First Advent. . . . Their teachings are dishonouring to the God who knows the end from the beginning" (p. 23). Such a method of meeting arguments may be a convenient one, but it is not convincing—at least, to intelligent minds.

culated by Futurist writers are unable to verify references, and hence are liable to be led away by fallacious inferences. For instance, the author of another recent publication, which we have already noticed, in his endeavour to prove the Futurist assertion that the foretold subdivision of the Roman Empire has not yet taken place, cites the authority of Bishop Wordsworth, as though he supported that view. He argues as follows:—"The number of horns, or kings, seen by Daniel on the heads of the Beast, the number as foretold by John (Rev. xvii), and the number of toes in the image, is definitely ten. Bishop Wordsworth writes, 'Being toes they must be ten,' not one more and not one less." And then the writer concludes, "In this form they have not yet appeared."[1] Now Bishop Wordsworth, whose words are here quoted as if he supported the Futurist view that the foretold subdivision has not yet taken place, argues in exactly the opposite direction—namely, that the subdivision *has* taken place. His words when quoted in full are as follows, and they should be carefully noted by every student of prophecy, as they cut at the root of much Futurist misinterpretation. He says: "It seems unnecessary to specify *ten* particular kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided; or even to demonstrate that it was divided into precisely *ten* kingdoms. The most ancient passage of Scripture in which the prophecy of the future division of the Roman Empire is found is the vision of the image (Dan. ii. 42), where these kingdoms are represented by the *toes* of the image. *Being toes they must be ten. Hence when this dismemberment is described in other successive prophecies, this denary number is retained,* and thus the number *ten* connects all these prophecies together, and serves to show that they point to the same object." Bishop Wordsworth in one of his latest publications further confirms the Historical view that the ten toes and the ten horns *have* received their fulfilment in the kingdoms of Europe. He says: "When the heathen empire of Rome fell new kingdoms arose from its ruins. These were the horns of the Beast which then sprouted up." How strikingly the number ten *has* characterized the subdivision of European

[1] *Proposal of Truce*, p. 80.

kingdoms, and still continues to do so, has been amply demonstrated by Professor Birks and Dr. Guinness.

Thus the writer from whom we have quoted makes Bishop Wordsworth appear to hold the very opposite view to that which he really maintains; and prophetical readers need to be cautioned against such fallacious arguments.[1]

We can only find space to notice one or two more of this writer's criticisms of the Historical view. He brings forward the common Futurist argument that the "little horn" of Daniel vii. cannot mean the Papal Power, represented by its head, the Pope, because the present depressed and humiliated condition of the Papacy falls short of the prophetic descriptions given of that despotic, persecuting power. The mistake of this argument arises from ignoring what we have previously pointed out (p. 243), namely, that the prophets who were commissioned by God to portray beforehand the Papal horn, which was to arise in the future, depicted it in its maturity, as it has already appeared, in all its strength and pride, and not in its present decrepit condition, shorn of much of its former power and hindered in the exercise of its cruelty and persecution. This writer even speaks of the Pope being now "practically impotent." That this is a great mistake is known to every one who knows anything of European political and ecclesiastical matters.

The further argument based upon the present condition of the Papacy likewise falls to the ground—namely, that the "little horn" of Daniel vii. cannot refer to the Papal Antichrist, because "the Antichrist of prophecy, whether as a little horn, man of sin, or beast from the abyss, was to be suddenly arrested and destroyed while yet in full possession of power, while wearing out the saints, while exalting himself against God, and marshalling the kings of the earth and their armies against the Lord, and be cast alive into the lake of fire."[2] The answer to this is obvious.

[1] See *Wordsworth on Apocalypse*, p. 524. *Union with Rome*, p. 28. We have previously quoted Wordsworth in our explanation of The Image in Daniel ii., see p. 161.

[2] *Proposal of Truce*, pp. 72, 73. These are old Futurist arguments again put forward.

Although the Papacy has been humbled and has lost much of its former prestige by the terrible blow of the fall of the Temporal Power, there is not the least reason why, just before the end, it should not for a brief time recover in a great degree its former capacity for mischief, as an expiring candle often flares up for a moment just before going out. As a world-empire it has indeed been shorn of the grandeur it once enjoyed. No one recognises this fact more clearly or deplores it more bitterly than the Papacy itself. Still, in its spiritual aspect it is as active and ambitious as ever, and its indirect political influence is tremendous. By a policy, which it is even now pursuing, it may yet become a chief factor in embroiling the nations in the general war which prophecy tells us will close the present dispensation. And then, in the midst of its last effort, its power for mischief will suddenly be arrested and its existence terminated by the appearance of the King of Kings, as we have previously explained.[1]

It should be remembered that, speaking generally, the prophetic measuring rod of the 1260 years of the Papal power is the characteristic period of the *prospering* of that Power, as we have before pointed out (see p. 143), and not of its existence. The 1260 years may be dated from its attaining to prominence A.D. 610 till it received the tremendous blow, under which it is now groaning, of the loss of the Temporal Power in 1870. And that blow was the signal of its doom, which is surely approaching, even though its spiritual power is still great, and though there may be such a temporary flare-up at the end as we have mentioned, before its final and sudden extinction at the coming of Christ.[2]

Futurist critics never cease to charge Historical interpreters with ignoring the *individual* character of the language employed in the prophecies of the Antichrist, as, for instance, in the case of the "little horn" of the Fourth Beast in Daniel, and the Man of Sin in St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. The point has

[1] See p. 206.

[2] That the Papacy is still a great spiritual Power, and that indirectly it still exercises wide political influence, has already been pointed out (p. 255) Futurist writers sometimes fall into the mistake of accusing the Historical system of ignoring the fact of the Papacy existing beyond the 1260 years.

been answered again and again, but still the criticism reappears in all their books and pamphlets. We have previously dealt fully with this question of individual language.[1] We need only repeat here that such language refers to a person, but it is a *representative* person—namely, the person of the Pope, as representing the system of which he is the head throughout the whole of its existence. Just in the same way we use individual language when we speak of "the Pope" as occupying an unique position, or making arrogant pretensions; but we do not by such language mean some one individual Pope to the exclusion of others; we speak generally of the head of the Papal system throughout its existence.

Perhaps an illustration may help to elucidate this point. An experiment was recently tried in America of taking a photograph of a number of faces in succession, belonging to the same class of persons—say, of musicians, for example. The faces were taken in the same position, one likeness being superimposed, as it were, upon the other; and thus a composite photograph or general portrait was produced, compounded out of the principal features of them all. Just so, if we look down the long list of Popes, and read of their personal lives, their public actions, their official words, their persistent persecutions, their arrogant pretensions, their sanction of false miracles, their instigation of wholesale massacres, their approval of the horrors of the Inquisition, together with that top-stone of blasphemous pride, the claim to infallibilty, we plainly recognise in the general portraiture thus obtained the very features of the representative person foretold by the prophets. His mouth has spoken "very great things"; he has been the invader of God's prerogatives; he has appeared in the character of The Lawless One, claiming to be above all law; he has been the persecutor of those who are faithful to "the testimony of Jesus"; and his manifestation has been accompanied by "lying wonders." Thus, by fulfiling these prophecies, and by putting himself, and the Virgin, and the saints, and the priesthood *in the place of* Christ, and so acting *against* Christ, he has shown himself to be—what the name implies—THE ANTICHRIST.

[1] See p. 101.

CHAPTER V

THE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION. THE INTRODUCTORY VISIONS

REVELATION I–IV

THERE is not space in the present volume to attempt to give *full* proof of the truth of the Historical system of interpretation, or to quote at length the Scriptures referred to. We hope, however, to be able to give *sufficient* proof; and for this purpose we propose to complete our examination of the Revelation by endeavouring to present a brief but clear explanation of the remaining visions in that book which have not yet come under our notice. And if our readers will compare the Scriptures themselves with the exposition here offered, we trust it will be a help towards the elucidation of that mysterious portion of God's Word to which a special blessing is attached, Revelation i. 3, and the right understanding of which becomes increasingly important and interesting as we advance towards the great events of the latter days.

In entering upon this part of our inquiry it may be interesting and useful to notice two general features of the Book of Revelation, which have an important bearing on the meaning of the visions recorded.[1]

(1) Before each revelation of special significance it was God's method to give St. John an *anticipatory* or *preparatory* vision, in order to illustrate what should follow, and to prepare him to receive the details that were about to be communicated. Thus in chapter i. 7, in the words, "Behold He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him," there is a brief *anticipatory* glance at that glorious event to which the whole book leads up. We

[1] In constructing the following general remarks the views of Bickersteth, Birks, Lange, Alford, Elliott, etc., have been consulted and compared, as also those of writers belonging to different schools of interpretation.

have here, as Lange well says, the *theme* of the Revelation announced. Afterwards, in the rest of the book, comes the working out of the theme. Similarly, in chapter i. 12–20, we have recorded a brief *preliminary* vision of the Lord Jesus in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, meaning that as King and Priest He is ever present, and working, and presiding, *in the midst of His Church*; and this vision is *preparatory* to the messages of warning and comfort sent to the seven Churches of Asia. Then, as *preparatory to the revelation proper*, foretelling things future to St. John, which begins at chapter iv., and reaches to the end of the book, there is the preliminary vision narrated in chapter iv. This is a *general anticipatory vision.* It gives in one brief view a representation of the *perfected result* of what is described in the further *detailed unfolding or revelation.* It presents God's dispensational schemes as they will be seen *when worked out.* While the further revelation in following chapters describes, in the language of symbolic prophecy, prominent events destined to take place in *the working out* of those schemes. Then, again, in chapter v. we have another *preparatory and anticipatory* vision, being a further development of that of chapter iv., with a *special view to the immediately following revelation* of the opening of the Seals.

So, to give another instance of this general feature in the structure of the Book of Revelation, in chapter xiv. we have a number of brief preparatory visions, *anticipatory* of subsequent visions which more fully work out details, or which illustrate points alluded to in them. As one more example, in chapter xxi. 2, St. John relates a vision of the Bride, which is preparatory to the fuller and more detailed description of the same glorious subject, which immediately follows, beginning at verse 9.

(2) The other feature that should be explained is the *standpoint* from which St. John beheld the various visions in the Revelation, and the way in which they were presented to him. At the beginning of the book, and for the messages to the Churches, his standpoint of observation was on *earth.* Thus we are told that in the isle called Patmos, one Lord's day, St. John heard behind him a voice, and he turned and saw a vision of the sanctuary, and the Lord Jesus in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

But for the main part of the book—that is, for the revelation proper, commencing at the fourth chapter, and containing symbolical prophecies, as we shall see, of the course of events between St. John's time and the second coming of Christ—his standpoint was an exalted position somewhere *above the earth*.

At the beginning of chapter iv. he describes this standpoint as follows: "After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard [*i.e.*, the former voice, mentioned chap. i. 10], a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter" (R.V.). That is to say, as Alford shows, events about to happen after the time present to St. John, and which were to be prefigured in the following visions. His position, therefore, according to the best commentators was a *point of elevation above the earth, from which he could see into heaven, as through "a door set open,"* and thus there was revealed to the prophet an expanse overhead where a scene in the higher heavens was displayed to his view.[1]

But also from this standpoint he could look down upon an *earthly landscape* spread out below him, and symbolising to him the world over which Rome then held sway. And not only so, but he could leave his standpoint and descend to the earthly scene in order himself to take his part in the symbolism; as, for instance, when he is bidden, "Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth."[2]

Such, then, was the standpoint to which St. John was transported in a trance, and from which he witnessed the following series of visions. He says he was "in the Spirit"—that is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit he was thrown into a state of ecstasy, and saw, not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of ecstatic vision, the things recorded.

We cannot exactly portray, as in a picture, all that St. John saw, or the correct position and perspective of the various objects which are described. But we are able, nevertheless, from inci-

[1] Compare Ezekiel i. 1: "The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God."

[2] Revelation x. 8.

dental notices, to form some general idea of how the symbolic visions of things in heaven and on earth were unfolded before him.

In the *heavenly* scene, on which he gazed looking upwards through the "door opened," there was presented to his view a vast space, in the midst of which was placed the throne of God, surrounded by the four symbolic "living creatures" and myriads of angelic beings. Somewhere in the space before the throne there was spread out "a glassy sea like unto crystal." There was also a heavenly Temple or Sanctuary included in the heavenly scene, with its "holy" and "most holy" place, and a golden altar of incense, and a great altar of sacrifice.[1]

On the other hand, there were depicted upon the *earthly* scene which St. John contemplated spread out below him, representing the world of the Roman Empire, various features which were to be employed in symbolically and prophetically representing events that were to take place in the world. Here, probably in the foreground, there was visible to the prophet a figuration of the earthly Temple, with courts and altars, corresponding to the same feature in the heavenly scene. Here also the Holy City was represented, and Mount Zion. The blue sea formed part of this lower scene. Rivers flowed through the landscape. Mountains were represented upon it. Storms swept over it. While, somewhere upon it, there was visible the mouth of "the abyss" from whence Satanic agencies issued to do their evil work upon the earth. The fall of the Apocalyptic Babylon was, in the course of St. John's visions, depicted upon it; and various scenes of judgment were there enacted before his view.

Then further, in connection with the earthly landscape which St. John saw, there was extended over it the sky, or atmospheric and starry *heaven*, from which angels descend; the sky in which the luminaries of heaven were seen—sun, moon, and stars, typical

[1] Some commentators think that there was no great altar of sacrifice in the heavenly scene. But there is no valid reason why there should not have been. And in chapter viii. 1, etc., in the vision of the incensing angel, both these altars seem to be distinctly alluded to as appearing upon the heavenly scene. Accordingly, with Alford, Barnes, and others, we conclude that there was a great brazen altar of sacrifice represented in front of the heavenly sanctuary, as well as a golden altar of incense within it.

of the ruling powers in the world. All these and other features of the scene were employed as required, in order to convey the prophetic meaning of the visions. Is the inspired seer directed to foretell something special in the history of God's Church on earth? There is the earthly temple visible on the scene, with all its sacred imagery available for the purpose. Is he required to prophesy of wars, and scourges, and desolations, with which the inhabitants of the earth shall be visited in judgment? There is the wide landscape of the Roman world spread out below him, over which tempests with symbolic meaning sweep, and desolating floods of water flow. Is he to foretell some tremendous revolution? He beholds an earthquake upon that scene, with all its accompaniments of terror and destruction. Does he need to portray events in the history of Satan, and the source from which all his evil agencies are put in motion? There is to be seen on the earthly landscape the dark mouth of the abyss, or bottomless pit. On the other hand, is he required to depict something of the loving purposes of God as they will be seen when all worked out, and of the glory of the future in store for the redeemed? There is available for that purpose the *heavenly* scene on which he is privileged to gaze through "the door opened"—a scene where he beholds the ministry of angels employed in carrying out the Divine counsels, and where he catches a glimpse of the happiness and glory of multitudes of the saved, and of the majesty of the King of Heaven Himself.[1]

When, therefore, we meet with the often-repeated expression "I saw," it means that St. John directed his look from his elevated standpoint either through the "opened door" into *heaven* or down to *earth*, according to the subjects of the several visions, and the scene most appropriate for their exhibition. Speaking generally, we may say that for the *anticipatory* visions —those representing God's purposes as they will be seen to be

[1] The reader must judge by the context whether by "*heaven*" in the Book of Revelation the lower sky, or whether the highest heaven, is intended to be understood, since both localities are spoken of under the same general term. Nor must we forget the idea of *exaltation* conveyed by the word heaven, as, for example, when our Lord spoke of Capernaum as being "exalted to heaven," so that the word is available for that use in symbolic prophecy.

when all is accomplished, such as those referring to the Millennial age and the great day of judgment,—he looks upwards through the "door opened" and sees the distant scene portrayed in the inner *heaven*; while for the actual *working out* of what is there represented as completed, and for the revelation of the successive events *leading up to that completion*, he looks down upon earth where the process is carried out.

Thus, for example, chapters iv. and v. are visions of the *anticipatory* nature which we have described, portraying the blessed condition of the redeemed when God's purposes shall at last be manifested as accomplished, and accordingly St. John sees them through "the door opened" pictured in the scene of the higher *heaven*. On the other hand, the greater part of the Revelation, foreshadowing judgments poured out on earth, and the fortunes of the Church of Christ in the world, and the progress of evil and its punishment, is seen by St. John depicted in a series of symbolic visions on the *earthly* landscape spread out below him. It is easy to see how such a twofold arrangement of an *earthly* and *heavenly* scene adds to the beauty, and harmony, and prophetic suitability of the Divine drama of the Revelation.

If the reader will bear these points in mind he will find it of great assistance in catching the meaning of this mysterious book.

The *time* occupied for the unfolding of these visions to St. John was in all probability the whole of that remarkable Sunday, during his exile in the isle of Patmos, of which he speaks at the commencement of his record :—"I was in the Spirit [*i.e.*, in a state of Divine ecstasy or trance] on the Lord's day." [1]

In connection with these words it may be well to notice a peculiar rendering of them which has been put forward by writers of the Futurist school in support of their theory. They translate them thus :—"I became in the spirit in the day of the Lord"—and they say that this means that St. John was projected in spirit into the Day of the Lord, the time of Christ's second coming, in order that he might see events to take place in immediate connection with that crisis. They also take "the things which must *shortly* come to pass," mentioned in *v.* 1. as the subject of the

[1] Chapter i. 10., R.V.

book, to mean "things which must be done with speed," events which when they have once set in must run their course *in a very brief period.*

By the aid of these translations Futurist interpreters seek to uphold their theory that the mass of the Book of Revelation refers to a series of events still in the future, and to be crowded into a few years at the close of this dispensation. In support of their view that "the Lord's day" here refers to the time of Christ's second coming, they contend that this expression, as meaning the first day of the week, had not come into use in St. John's time, or in the earliest ages of the Church.

We think it can be shown that in all these points the Futurist arguments are erroneous. The translations are forced and unnatural. They are contrary both to the Authorised Version and the Revised Version, whose renderings are free from prophetical bias. Alford says:—"It really is astonishing how any even moderate Greek scholars can persuade themselves that the words 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day' can mean that which these commentators maintain." Grimm's Lexicon, our best authority on New Testament Greek, does not even give "the day of the Lord," in the meaning assigned to it by these writers, as a possible rendering of the Greek for "the Lord's day." As to the early use of this expression, it is found in that earliest of uninspired Christian writings, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which dates from immediately after the Book of the Revelation. We there meet the expression in a full form as follows:—"And on the Lord's day of the Lord come together and break bread" (c. xiv. 1). Soon after this it is found in Ignatius.[1] Then, a little later on, at the close of the second century, it appears in Tertullian as "*Dominica dies.*" And so the expression grew into general use. Thus there is a complete chain of evidence reaching up to the time of St. John and the present passage in the Revelation, showing that "the Lord's day" is here to be taken in the sense in which we now use the expression, and as corresponding to our *Sunday.*

As to the phrase, "the things which must shortly come to

[1] Bishop Lightfoot. *Ign. ad Magn.*, p. 129.

pass," here again both the Authorised and the Revised Versions, and Grimm's Lexicon, are in favour of the usual rendering, and against that of "in swift succession." Alford shows very clearly by the corresponding words in Revelation xxii. 6, 7, that the expression means "speedily," "soon,"—*i.e.*, as events appear to Him who views time from the standpoint of eternity, and to whom a thousand years are as one day; the key to such phrases being furnished by Luke xviii. 7, 8.

The substance of the book of Revelation is summed up in the words addressed to St. John at the conclusion of the opening vision, that of the Lord Jesus, as Head over His Church, walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. St. John is bidden:—"Write the things which thou sawest [*i.e.*, the vision above mentioned which he had just witnessed], and the things that are [*i.e.*, the then present state of things in the Churches of St. John's time, as next described in the messages sent to them, recorded in chapters ii. and iii.], and the things that shall come to pass hereafter [*i.e.*, the great events in the history of the Church and the world which were to transpire between the things then present and the beginning of eternity, and which were to be foretold in a series of symbolical visions, commencing at chapter iv., and reaching to the end of the book]" (Rev. i. 19, R.V.).[1]

[1] That this is the meaning of the above division of the book is shown by Bengel, Lücke, Wordsworth, Speaker's Com., Fausset, the Cambridge Bible for Schools, Lange, etc. The interpretation of Futurists, as put forward by the author of *The Great Prophecies*, would explain "the things that are" (which, as spoken to St. John, and coming between what he had seen, and what was afterwards to follow, must surely refer to the things then going on in St. John's time) as if the meaning of the expression could be extended so as to include the whole course of this dispensation until the last few years of it; and they postpone "the things which shall come to pass hereafter"—literally, "the things which shall be after these," forming the subject of the mass of the Book of Revelation—to those last few years still in the future—an explanation which we trust our readers will see to be quite inadmissible. Alford, in common with the authorities mentioned above, utterly rejects this Futurist interpretation. He suggests, however, that only a twofold division may be intended. He shows some good reason for translating the Greek for "and the things that are" by the rendering "*and what things they are*," meaning what things are *signified* by the vision. He thus divides the visions of the book into what St. John had just seen, and "the things which shall be

Lange has some excellent remarks upon the explanatory words added to the above injunction:—"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches" (R.V.). On this Lange says:—"This adjunct is of the highest moment. It gives us to understand . . . *that the entire series of visions will consist of symbolical mysteries, not to be understood literally*, requiring interpretation, yet susceptible of interpretation through Biblical means. The interpretation which Christ here gives by way of example reminds us of the interpretation of the first two parables in Matthew xiii., also designed as a guide to the interpretation of the rest."[1]

We have already said that the opening vision, that of Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, was *preparatory* to the messages to the seven Churches in chapters ii. and iii. These messages obviously refer to the state of things then prevalent amongst the Churches, and, as obviously, contain lessons for the whole Church of Christ throughout the present dispensation. It is held by some that the reference to the condition of those seven Churches was also intended as a prophecy of *seven successive periods of corresponding character* in the history of the Church of Christ throughout the present dispensation; but this intrepretation can by no means be relied upon as certain. According to this view the *faithful* Philadelphia Church would correspond prophetically to the era of the Reformation, and the *lukewarm* Laodicean Church to the age succeeding it, including the present time. But when we reflect upon the enormous and

after these"—*i.e.*, the whole course of visions which were to follow, beginning at chapter iv., and including the history of this dispensation.

[1] Similarly Dr. Gordon, in his excellent work *Ecce Venit*, or *Behold, He cometh*, well remarks:—"The long interval of apostasy and trial, which lay before the Church ere the advent should arrive, was both revealed and concealed in prophecy—revealed even to the minutest circumstance and detail; yet in such *hieroglyphic symbols and chronology* that it should remain graciously concealed until history should furnish the Rosetta Stone for its interpretation." We have previously touched upon the point of prophecy being veiled in symbol. See introduction, p. 6. For further remarks on the same point, see pp. 101, 134.

ever increasing development of faithful and earnest service in the Church of Christ during the last hundred years, especially with regard to mission work at home and abroad, it is hard to see how the present age, in spite of the advance of infidelity, can be characterized as *lukewarm* in comparison with the former.[1]

Chapter iv. is, as we have said, an *anticipatory* vision, and so, in accordance with the explanation we have given, it is viewed by St. John in the *heavenly* scene, through the "door opened." It represents beforehand the glorious consummation to which the events that had to run their course on earth would lead, when the time to which the vision points should be reached. That time, as shown by the nature of the vision itself, and the meaning of the symbols employed, is in the first place the time when the Lord Jesus shall have come *to establish His kingdom, to raise His elect saints who shall rule in that kingdom, and to restore creation to a vastly improved condition*, the time referred to by St. Peter in the words "whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things" (Acts iii. 21). It is a vision of God the Father seated on His throne as the *Creator* of the world, and receiving the praises of all *creation*. But the vision also points on, as we shall explain, for its perfected realisation, to the new heaven and new earth of the eternal state after the Millennium.

Who are the "elders" in this vision? By a very large consent of the best interpreters they are *the Church of God's elect*. The "elders of Israel" (and the same is true of other Eastern peoples) were privileged individuals chosen out of the mass of the nation. They constituted the body of rulers holding various offices, and were thus in a distinct position from the main body of the people who were ruled by them. Moreover, "elders" were regarded as assessors of the king in the matter of giving judgment.[2] We can hardly be wrong, therefore, in saying that the symbol of the "elders" in the vision means, as we have said, the Church of God's elect, the rulers in His kingdom, who will be raised by

[1] This prophetic meaning of the messages to the seven Churches is rejected by Trench, Alford, etc. It is supported by Vitringa, Lange, etc., and is generally adopted by Futurists.

[2] See "Elders," in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.*

Christ at the first resurrection, in order to share with Him in the government and glory of His Millennial reign. Their portraiture in the vision exactly accords with this, for they are seen *seated on thrones* around the great central throne. They are clothed in white robes of royalty and victory, and they wear *crowns* of gold upon their heads. As to their number, twenty-four, this may refer either to the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles, thus representing the elect under both dispensations, or to the twenty-four courses of the priests.

As regards the four "living creatures," mistranslated "beasts" in the Authorised Version, they have a far wider meaning. A careful study of the best authorities, and of all the Scriptures bearing upon the subject, leads to the conclusion that these mysterious figures are identical with, and the latest presentation of, what are noticed from time to time in the Old Testament as *the Cherubim*, and that they constitute the sacred symbol of *restored sentient creation* represented by its highest examples—a *lion*, an *ox*, a *man*, and an *eagle*—the number four, as explained by Alford, Lange, etc., signifying terrestrial extension.[1]

Of course we must understand, as is plainly shown by a comparative study of the details of the symbol in other passages, that *man* forms the prominent element in it. Indeed, in the Tabernacle and Temple, where Christ's redemptive work in relation to man was the great subject of the whole symbolism, the Cherubim

[1] Various interpretations have been given of this complex and mysterious emblem, some of them highly fanciful. But that the above is the true signification of the four "living creatures," or Cherubim, is well shown by Alford, who says :—"The four cherubic forms are representatives of animated nature—of God's sentient creation." He adds that this meaning was handed down by tradition, and incorporated in the rabbinical sentence, "There are four which hold pre-eminence in this world : *man* among all animals ; the *eagle* amongst birds ; the *ox* amongst cattle ; the *lion* amongst [wild] beasts." He says, further, that this view is upheld by the best of modern commentators, De Wette, Hengstenberg, Dusterdieck, etc., to which we may add the Speaker's Commentary and Professor Fairbairn.

That the animal world as well as man, and, indeed, creation at large, will share in the blessings that will be introduced by Christ at His coming is shown in the well-known passage (Rom. viii. 19–23) :—"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God," etc. (R.V.). The Millennial prophecies in Isaiah are to the same effect—*e.g.*, Isaiah lxv. 17–25.

over the ark seem to have been represented simply as two winged *human* figures, the *two-fold* figuration probably referring to the Old and New Testament dispensations. They were made of gold, the same as the mercy-seat, and it was expressly directed that they were to be "*of one piece*" with it.[1] Now the mercy-seat, or *propitiatory*, as it is called in the N. T. (Heb. ix. 5, R.V. marg.), typified the Lord Jesus as our Atonement. Hence these Cherubim, *of the same material and of one piece with the mercy-seat*, symbolised those who shall be *one with Christ*, and who shall be made like unto Him—in other words, *the redeemed from amongst mankind.* As the Cherubim stood *on the mercy-seat*, so our sure standing place is *in Christ Jesus*. As their faces were "toward the mercy-seat," so the redeemed in glory will ever contemplate with adoration the Author of their redemption, and, like the "living creatures" in the Revelation, praise Him for His great work of Atonement. As God is said to "dwell *between the Cherubim*," so in many Scriptures God is spoken of as dwelling *in the midst of His redeemed people.* As the Shekinah glory was there manifested, so shall the redeemed hereafter behold the glory of God, and dwell in His light.

But whilst the emblem of the Cherubim thus admitted of modifications, according to the circumstances of the case, and the lesson especially intended to be taught, the usual form seems to have been the fourfold presentation as already described. It was so seen by Ezekiel, and by St. John at Patmos, and this was probably its form in the garden of Eden. Hence the more *particular* form seen over the ark symbolised, as we have said, *redeemed humanity*, while the more *general* fourfold form had a wider meaning, and symbolised *restored sentient creation*, pre-eminently *man*, but also including, as we have shown in our previous note, the rest of the animal world. It was a prophetic symbol foreshadowing the perfect life of the future. Strictly speaking, this ideal will not be perfectly reached till the eternal state begins at the end of the Millennium. But the Millennial age, which may be regarded as the threshold of eternity, will be the foretaste of that life of happiness and perfection, and will lead on to it. The symbolism of the Cherubim concerning redeemed *man* will indeed be

[1] Exodus xxv. 18–20, xxxvii. 7.

perfectly realised even in the Millennium, *in the case of the saints of the first resurrection*, who in their glorified bodies will then rule with Christ. But as regards mankind living on earth during the Millennium, who will be the subjects of that kingdom, the symbolism of restored humanity will only be largely, not perfectly, realised. During that favoured age all creation will share with man in the blessings of the new order of things to be introduced by Christ, as we have already shown to be indicated by the symbolism of the Cherubim; but the *perfect* realisation of the whole symbol will not be reached till the eternal state begins at the time of the general judgment at the end of the Millennium, when *all* the saved of all ages, including the Millennial harvest of souls, will have attained, like the Church of the First-born, to resurrection life in transfigured or resurrection bodies. What will be the perfected form of the rest of creation when that time comes is not revealed. We are told, however, by St. Peter that there will be "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness"; and the happy picture is further dimly shadowed forth in the beautiful description abounding in metaphor which forms the close of the Book of Revelation.[1]

It should be noted that "the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life," of which we read in Genesis iii. 24, in connection with the placing of the Cherubim "at the east of the garden of Eden," must be regarded as something distinct from the cherubic symbol itself. The fiery "*sword*," or tongue of lambent flame, was manifested there for a special purpose—namely, to symbolise to man that re-entrance into Paradise was barred until Paradise should be regained for man through Christ's redemptive work; while the *Cherubim* told forth, as we have shown, that that work would surely be one day accomplished.

Hence we see that the four "living creatures," or the Cherubim, are essentially an emblem of *hope*, a prophetic symbol foretelling "the times of the restoration of all things." The emblem was first brought into view in the Garden of Eden, when Paradise was lost. The emblem will be superseded by the reality when

[1] *Cf.* 2 Peter iii. 13; Revelation xxi., xxii. We shall treat of this more at large when we come to explain the closing portion of the Apocalypse.

Paradise is regained. Hence in the last two chapters of the Revelation, describing that glorious consummation when *hope* has been *realised*, neither "elders" nor "living creatures" are mentioned. Professor Fairbairn, speaking of the "living creatures" in the Revelation, has beautifully expressed this thought. He says: "In their ascription of praise they are represented not only as giving honour and glory, but also thanks, to Him that sitteth on the throne, and as joining with the elders in the new song that was sung to the Lamb for the benefits of His salvation. So that they plainly stand related to the redemptive as well as the creative work of God. And yet in all, from first to last, only as ideal representatives of what pertains to God's kingdom on earth, not as substantive existences themselves possessing it. They belong to the imagery of faith, not to her abiding realities. And so when the ultimate things of redemption come, their place is no more found. They hold out the lamp of hope to fallen man through the wilderness of life, pointing his expectations to a better country. But when this country breaks upon our view, when the new heavens and the new earth supplement the old, then also the ideal gives way to the real. We see another Paradise, with its river and tree of life, and a present God and presiding Saviour, and holy angels, and a countless multitude of redeemed spirits rejoicing in the fulness of blessing and glory provided for them; but no sight is anywhere to be seen of the Cherubim of glory. They have fulfilled the end of their temporary existence; and when no longer needed they vanish like the guiding stars of night before the bright sunshine of eternal day."[1]

It should be added that this heavenly scenery of chapter iv., with its throne, the elders, living creatures, temple, etc., is, as Alford points out, *the background of the Apocalyptic drama*. It is regarded as standing throughout the visions, and is referred to from time to time as occasion requires.

[1] *Typology of Scripture*, p. 279.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEALS, THE TRUMPETS, AND THE VIALS. CONTRAST OF FUTURIST INTERPRETATION. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED—REV. V.-XVI. 15

THE SEALS

BEFORE the "times of the restitution of all things," which were foreshadowed by the *anticipatory* vision of Revelation iv. that we have been considering, could be fulfilled, much had to take place in the Church and in the world, and this is symbolically foretold in the subsequent series of visions, constituting the mass of the Book of Revelation. St. John is prepared for this unfolding of events by the *introductory* vision of the *sealed* book in chapter v., the loosing of the seals symbolising the progressive accomplishment of those intervening events, as we shall presently explain.

This vision of chapter v. is a continuation of the preceding one, and was similarly viewed in the *heavenly* scene. St. John, in verse 1, relates how he further "saw in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals." None but the Lamb was found worthy to open this book. By the introduction of the "Lamb standing, as though it had been slain," into the scene (ver. 6), the truth was brought out that the restoration of God's *creation*, which was the theme of the previous chapter, is entirely the fruit of Christ's *redemptive work*, and that as Christ was the agent in *creation* so He must be in *restoration*. The fact that none but He could loose the seals shows that all intervening events leading up to that glorious consummation are under His control, and take place by His permission.

Several interpretations have been given by commentators of the

meaning of the *sealed book*, which is described (ver. 1), as being "written within and on the back [indicating fulness and completeness, just as in the case of the roll given to Ezekiel],[1] close sealed with seven seals." The best explanation, and one that throws light upon the arrangement of the whole of the Revelation, is that adopted by Alford and others—namely, that it is *the book of God's full purposes of redemption, and of the glorification of His Church and of creation at large.* The actual contents of the book, therefore, refer to the same period to which the previous vision of chapter iv. pointed—namely, the time of the restitution of all things. This book will not begin to be actually manifested or *opened*—in other words, these glorious purposes of God will not begin to be openly revealed—till the second coming of Christ. Professor Birks has well remarked that the *sealing* of a prophecy in Scripture denotes "a season of *delay* in its fulfilment in the sight of the world." We may apply this definition to the symbolical meaning of these seals. It is clear that a *seal* of a book or roll is an *obstacle* or *delay*, which must be removed before that which is sealed can be opened and read. If, therefore, the "sealed book" be, as we have said, the book containing the full development of God's wonderful purposes in the restitution of all things, and if the Second Advent be the crisis which will *begin* the manifestation of those purposes, so that all can see and read them, then the series of "seven *seals*" that must first be loosed may be taken as symbolising certain events, or epochs, in the history of the world, which, according to our Lord's own words to His disciples concerning His second coming, in His prophecy on the Mount of Olives, "must needs come to pass *first*" (Luke xxi. 9), before that glorious consummation can take place; and which, therefore, may be regarded as so many *delays* to the final open manifestation of God's purposes. Thus the actual *coming to pass* in succession of those preliminary epochs, or events, answers to the successive loosing of the *seals*, and may be regarded as removing *delays* that intervene before the book which will reveal those purposes can be opened. Each seal loosed, each epoch fulfilled, brings the course of God's

[1] Ezek. ii. 10.

providence one stage nearer to the glorious manifestation of His plans, as they will be seen to be, when finally worked out to their conclusion.[1]

What, then, are the events, or epochs, in the world's history that were signified by the visions that were successively presented to the contemplation of St. John at the opening of the seven seals, events that must take place before the coming of Christ, and leading up to it?

Where symbols are of such a general nature as to be capable of more than one application, it is not surprising that there should be a variety of interpretation, and, accordingly, various meanings have been given of the horses and riders in these visions. We believe that the true interpretation is to be found by recognising both a general and a particular signification. The same passage of Scripture to which we have already referred in order to explain the meaning of the symbol of a "seal"—namely, our Lord's prophecy upon the Mount of Olives—also gives us help towards understanding the meaning of the visions. That wonderful prophecy given by Christ to His disciples throws a flood of light on many points in the more expanded and symbolic prophecy of the Revelation. Our Lord there spoke of what must take place before the crisis of the destruction of Jerusalem, and also, looking further on, before the far greater crisis of His Second Advent. He foretold a series of the very same judgments that are pictured in the Seals,—wars, famines, pestilences, and persecutions,—and the point of His warning is contained in the words: "See that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass;

[1] In connection with this explanation, and as illustrating it, we may note here that the opening of each of the first four seals is introduced, as Alford points out, by a voice proceeding from one of the four "living creatures," saying, "Come." We have already shown that the "living creatures" are symbols of restored creation. If, therefore, the seals represent things that must first come to pass before that blessed era can arrive, it is appropriate that the "living creatures," symbolising creation, should be represented in the vision as saying "Come," thus hastening, as it were, the things symbolised by the opening of the seals. Compare the longings of creation in Romans viii. 19. The cry, "Come," R.V. [not "Come and see," as in A.V.] is generally considered to be a call to the horsemen, bidding them to come forth on the scene of the vision. Alford prefers to regard it as addressed to Christ, comparing Revelation xxii. 20.

but the end is not yet" (Matt. xxiv. 6). Our Lord's words contained an intimation that there would be a recurrence of such events leading up to the downfall of Judaism at the destruction of Jerusalem, and also, in a more general sense, that such events, or epochs, would continue to take place till the time when He would come again to set up His kingdom. We find the same twofold meaning in the visions of the opening of the "seals." In a general sense, and without pressing any exact order, the first five Seals have been receiving an obvious fulfilment during the course of the present dispensation. There has been a recurrence of periods of triumph and success, of wars and bloodshed, of distress and oppression, of desolation and death, and also of persecution, throughout the present dispensation ; and these will continue in various degrees of fulfilment until the actual coming again of our Lord, which we shall show to be included in the symbolism of the sixth Seal.

But whilst in this general sense the Seals foreshadowed the course of this world's history during the present dispensation, we shall see that there is another more particular fulfilment of their symbolism, which assigns a more exact and definite meaning to the imagery employed, and exhibits a closer correspondence of the facts of history with the details of the vision. We shall show that just as the wars, and distress, and famines, and pestilences, and persecutions, of which Christ prophesied on the Mount of Olives, received an earlier and more definite fulfilment in the course of events that led up to the fall of Judaism, so the Seals in their more definite and earlier fulfilment foreshadowed the course of events in the history of the Roman Empire up to the great crisis of the fall of Paganism as the acknowledged ruling power of the world.

Thus, in this twofold sense, the prophetic visions of the opening of the "seals" are peculiarly adapted to their position as the first of the three sevenfold series, the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials. In their more general signification they cover the whole time occupied by these three series, spanning the present dispensation. But in their more exact and particular meaning they introduce a succession of marked epochs leading up to the fall of Paganism, a succession to be further continued, in the subsequent

series of the Trumpets and Vials, up to the goal of the Second Advent.

Let us now examine briefly the more definite fulfilment of the symbolism of the Seals of which we have spoken.

The opening of the first Seal is thus described :—"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, . . . and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow ; and there was given unto him a crown ; and he came forth conquering and to conquer."[1] The prophet, looking down from his elevated standpoint of observation upon the scene of the Roman earth spread out below him, beholds this symbolic horse and rider go forth upon it. What does the symbol mean?

It has been shown by Mede, Vitringa, Newton, and others of the Historical school, more especially by Elliott, that the series of the Seals represents different stages in the decline of the Pagan Roman Empire, beginning with a period of prosperity and ending with its fall. It can be shown from the pages of Gibbon, and other historians, that just such epochs as are here symbolised did actually occur in the course of that decline. Daniel had already employed various animals as prophetic symbols suitable to the several empires which they represented. Similar emblems are stamped upon coins, both in ancient times and our own, to denote ruling Powers. In the days of ancient Rome the *horse* was a recognised symbol of the Empire, and appeared on its coins and standards. We may take, therefore, the *horse* in these visions as aptly representing the Roman Empire, while the *rider* is a symbol of a *power that holds sway* in it. The *colour* of the *horse* indicates the *condition* of the *Empire* at the time of the particular era designated ; and there is something conspicuous in the personal appearance of the *rider* that symbolises some *characteristic* prevailing in the Empire at that time. Does victory and prosperity reign? The rider has a *bow* and a *crown*. Does *bloodshed* and *military despotism* override the Empire? The rider of the horse holds a *sword*. Does *distress* and *civil oppression* reign? The rider holds a *balance*. Does *mortality* in a remarkable degree hold sway? The rider is *Death* himself.

[1] Rev. vi. 1, 2 (R.V.).

Let us apply these principles of interpretation. In the first Seal, as we have seen, the horse is *white*. Is there anything in the history of the Pagan Roman Empire to correspond? *White* symbolises *victory* and *prosperity*. A white horse was used by Roman generals in their triumphs. If we look into history for the fulfilment, we find that Gibbon describes just such an era as characterizing what he calls "the golden age of the Roman Empire," beginning from St. John's time and lasting to the accession of Commodus (*i.e.*, from about A.D. 98 to 180). He speaks of it as a period "unstained with civil blood," thus illustrating the contrast of the *white* horse with the *red* horse of the next Seal. It was an age of triumph in the case of such wars as were undertaken outside the Empire, and of peace within it. Gibbon adds the following remarkable statement:—"If a man were called to fix a period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus." [1] Here, therefore, we can see a striking fulfilment of the crowned rider on the white horse in the first Seal, going forth bow in hand, token of military strength, "conquering and to conquer." This last expression, together with a supposed identity of the rider on the white horse with that in the vision of Revelation xix. 11–16, which foreshadows the coming of Christ to set up His kingdom, has led Alford and other expositors to interpret the first Seal as a vision symbolising the beginning of the career of Christianity in the world. But such an explanation introduces confusion into the imagery. As to the phrase "conquering and to conquer"—literally, "in order that he might conquer"—it means no more, than that the career of triumph and prosperity entered upon was intended and expected to continue. This was just the attitude of the Roman Empire at the time. Moreover, so far from the rider on the white horse corresponding with that of Revelation xix., a comparison of the two passages shows at once a marked contrast. The first Seal pictures an *earthly* world-empire, maintained by *earthly* weapons, just such a symbolism as is stamped on earthly coins, while the vision of the rider in Revelation xix.

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, p. 126; cited by Elliott.

bears unmistakeably the stamp of *Divinity.* "His name is called the Word of God." His weapon is the "sharp sword" that "proceedeth out of His mouth," the Word of Him who has only to speak, and it is done. The former world-empire was, in spite of its expectations, destined to decline and fall. The world-empire of Christ is to be established for ever.[1]

When the second Seal was opened we read, "Another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another, and there was given unto him a great sword" (ver. 4). In this description of the red horse and its rider we have an obvious symbol of the Roman Empire characterized by *internecine war and bloodshed.* If we turn to history we find that just such a period followed upon the golden age symbolised by the first Seal. The historian Sismondi says:—"With Commodus' death commenced a most disastrous period. It lasted 92 years, from A.D. 192 to 284. During that time thirty-two emperors and twenty-seven pretenders to the Empire alternately, by *incessant civil warfare,* hurled each other from the throne." The cause of all this was the increasing power of the *soldiery* in deciding the fate of the Empire, showing, as Gibbon says, that "the power of the *sword*" had begun its reign, and military rule was supreme. "This state of things," remarks the historian, "was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman Empire." The aptness of the symbol of *a great sword* in the hand of the rider of the *red* horse to denote this condition of *military* despotism and *blood-stained civil wars* in the Empire is, therefore, obvious.

Next comes the opening of the third Seal:—"And behold a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three

[1] Both the *bow* and the *sword* are familiar Scriptural emblems of power and victory. Elliott gives an engraving of a Roman medal on which the emperor is represented seated upon a horse, and going forth on a military expedition, while a figure in front holds out a crown in token of anticipated success. He gives a further meaning to the bow as being a Cretan symbol, and so referring to the Emperor Nerva who was a Cretan; but this perhaps is pressing detail too far.

measures of barley for a penny; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not."[1] Here we have a distinct symbol of *injury done in relation to the produce of the earth.* "The voice issues from the throne—from the midst of the representatives of creation, the woes denounced against which it is the object of the voice to mitigate."[2] The words of the voice are a call for *justice to be administered*, both in respect of quantity and price, with regard to the ordinary means of subsistence. Not actual famine, therefore, is meant by this Seal, as it is often interpreted, for that is the subject of the following Seal, but a state of general want, misery and depression, the result of human injustice.[3]

In the command, "hurt thou not the oil and the wine," we have an instance of *metonymy*, a frequent figure of speech in Scripture, by which, in the case of two nouns closely related, one is put for the other.[4] The idea is that of injury *inflicted on man, in connection with these things*, not on the things themselves. Just as angelic agents, controlling the action of the winds and their injury to man, are bidden, in a subsequent vision, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God" (ch. vii. 3), so, here, there is a command to human agents not to injure the mass of mankind by their action with regard to the produce of the earth. The *balance* is an ordinary symbol of even-handed justice. It was the emblem, as testified by Roman coins, of the office of the governors who held rule for the emperor throughout the provinces. The best commentary on the meaning of the imagery of this Seal, and of the voice proceeding from the throne in the midst of the living creatures, is the command of God given to the governors of Israel at a time of special injustice and oppression of the nation:

[1] Rev. vi. 5, 6.

[2] Speaker's Commentary.

[3] So Speaker's Commentary: "Scarcity is symbolised, not absolute famine as in the next Seal." It should be noted that the value of money varied greatly at different times, and the value of produce was of course according to its scarcity or plenteousness. Hence the opportunity for injustice under a bad government.

[4] See an interesting little volume by Rev. J. Neil, *Strange Figures*, p. 31. Mr. Neil was a long resident in Palestine, and is well acquainted with Eastern or Biblical language.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel; remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice; take away your exactions from My people, saith the Lord God. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath." [1]

In the opening of this third Seal, therefore, there was symbolically foretold a period when the blighting effects of *mal-administration* in civil matters should be especially conspicuous in the Roman Empire, just as the preceding second Seal denoted the Empire under the sanguinary results of *military despotism*. Is there any corresponding period which arose in the history of the Empire presenting in a special degree the characteristics thus symbolised? Elliott shows that about thirty years after the beginning of the second Seal just such an era began to set in.[2] Gibbon relates how, under Caracalla, "the great body of his subjects was oppressed by aggravated taxes, and every part of the Empire crushed under the weight of his iron sceptre." The evil grew, in spite of the attempts of the better emperors to suppress it, till at last, as Gibbon says, it "*darkened* the Roman world with its deadly shade." Thus the historian illustrates the imagery of the Seals, and shows that as the era of the first Seal was one of happiness and prosperity, symbolised by the *white* horse, so the condition of want and wretchedness in the Empire, in consequence of unjust administration, which specially characterized

[1] Ezekiel xlv. 9, 10.

[2] It must be remembered that both history and prophecy represent eras as *overlapping* each other. The *order of succession in which the epochs conspicuously begin* is what is denoted by the symbolism of the several Seals, rather than the exact point of their termination. Moreover, it should be further borne in mind that it is not implied that these evils did not exist at other times, but only that they *in a special degree* characterized the eras noticed, and indicated stages of decline in the Empire. Canon Garratt has well remarked as follows with regard to these connected visions:—"It is impossible to write any history, preserving at once the sequence of events and the order of time. The most accurate chronological arrangement is one in which all the *commencements* of connected series of events are placed chronologically. In this case their endings will certainly not be in the order of time. One will end before the next to it begins; another will end while the next to it is midway in its course; another will end after the next to it has ended, and include the whole of it. History cannot be written otherwise, unless it neglects altogether the natural connection of facts. It is the same with prophecy for the same reason." *Commentary on the Revelation*, p. 82.

the era of the third Seal, is aptly symbolised by the *black* horse. We all know that Gibbon certainly had no idea of supporting Inspiration or Prophecy, and therefore the remarkable way in which his words illustrate the symbolism which we are considering is all the more striking.

Next we come to the fourth Seal: "And behold a pale horse [*i.e.* of a livid, death-like hue, *Alford*]: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence [so *marg.* R.V., *Alford*, etc.] and by the wild beasts of the earth." [1]

This Seal is well explained in one of the able prophetical papers contributed by the late Sir Arthur Blackwood to *The Christian.*

He thus vividly describes the scene witnessed by St. John in vision on the landscape symbolising the Roman world spread out before him: "Once more the thunder shout 'Come' is heard, and forth stalks a horse of livid hue; no human hand guides it; its ghastly rider bears the name of Death, and following in his train appears some symbolic representation [probably also in personal form, and so again in Rev. xx. 14] of Hades, the world of the departed. A terrible scene is witnessed. Over a quarter of that part of the earth, which is the scene of the vision, death reigns supreme. Human strife, famine, and pestilence desolate its fair regions, and the wild beasts of the forests range round its cities and villages to take their prey from among the plague and famine stricken inhabitants. Listen again to Gibbon, who, apparently unconscious that he is employing the very language of the Book that he derided, describes the period that immediately followed the death of Alexander Severus [who made the last authoritative attempts to remedy the corruption and oppression symbolised under the previous Seal] as 'years of shame and misfortune, of confusion and calamity.' 'The ruined Empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution.' He speaks of 'the *sword* of barbarous invaders and military tyrants,' of 'the general *famine*,' and 'the furious *plague* which raged with-

[1] Revelation vi. 8.

out intermission for fifteen years, 5,000 persons dying at one time daily in Rome,' and adds that 'war, pestilence, and famine had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species.' And it is also recorded that the ravages of wild beasts over the depopulated portions of the Empire had become a crying evil."

Thus all the features of the symbol, *sword*, *famine*, *pestilence*, and *wild beasts*,—the same "four sore judgments" of which Ezekiel prophesied with reference to the downfall of Israel and Judah,[1]—specially characterized this age, constituting a marked epoch in the decline of the Pagan Roman Empire.

Next follows the opening of the fifth Seal. We read: "And when he opened the fifth seal I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God. . . . And they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And there was given them to each one a white robe [token of the glory that would surely one day be theirs]; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled."[2]

It is uncertain whether this vision, like the previous one, was witnessed by St. John upon the earthly scene, or whether he saw it, through the "door opened," in the heavenly scene. Commentators differ on this point. The *meaning* is well given by Alford. He says: "The representation here in which they are seen *under the altar* is simply symbolical, carrying out the likeness of them to victims slain on the altar. Even as the blood of these victims was poured under the altar, and the life was in the blood, so the souls of the martyrs are represented as under the symbolical altar in heaven, crying for vengeance, as blood is often said to do." Like the groans of creation (Rom. viii. 22), so the cry of the martyrs here implies a crying for the Lord Jesus to come and manifest Himself the righteous Judge; for only then can the present evil state of things be brought to an end. In what appearance these souls were represented to St. John

[1] Ezekiel xiv. 21.

[2] Revelation vi. 9–11 (R.V.).

is not revealed, and, as Alford says, it is idle to inquire, seeing that the apostle was in a state of spiritual and supernatural vision.

All are agreed that we have here symbolised an *era of persecution*; and all students of Church history know how the spirit of persecution which had broken out against the Christians from time to time reached its climax in the terrible storm that burst forth under Diocletian, when it was determined to root out the very name of Christian. This period, A.D. 303–311, succeeded that of the previous Seal, and is spoken of by historians as the "era of martyrs." Moreover, it is important to notice that the words addressed to the souls under the altar—"that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled"—indicate that, following this martyr era, there would be a period of cessation from persecution; but that in after years the storm would rage again, and another great harvest of martyrs would be gathered in before their number should be completed. We know what a terrible fulfilment of this prophetic intimation has taken place under the Papal Antichrist. The blood of millions of martyrs slain during the dark ages, when Rome was able to carry out her will, still cries for vengeance. The number is not yet quite made up. But the day of deliverance and retribution is approaching.

Next comes the solemn language of the sixth Seal, which we shall have to notice more fully. After the era of the martyrs, symbolised, as we have seen, by the previous Seal, there followed the era of the conversion of the Roman Empire from professed Paganism to professed Christianity—a tremendous revolution, the counterpart of what it would be now, if the profession of Christianity were to be put down by law, and Paganism enforced in its stead. We shall hope to show that the awe-inspiring language of the sixth Seal, which speaks of the darkening of sun and moon, the falling of stars, the prevalence of terror, and the anticipation of judgment, is, in the first place, a vivid symbolical prediction, in terms borrowed from the Old Testament prophets, of this important crisis of the overthrow of Paganism as the religion of

the Roman Empire, whilst it also points on to the far greater crisis of the coming of Christ.

The description is as follows: "And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs, when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were removed out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who is able to stand?"[1]

It should be borne in mind that this is not a narration of actual facts, but a description of a *vision* which St. John saw, and we have to endeavour to discover the meaning of that vision.

It is in this language of the sixth Seal that objectors to the Historical system believe they find their firmest foothold, and stake the issue between the two methods of interpretation. As the objection is stated most forcibly by the Futurist author from whom we have previously quoted, we shall place it before the reader in his own words. He chooses this as his special point of attack, saying that, "if it [*i.e.* the Historical system] fails, when tested, at some one vital point, it breaks down altogether." He then gives Elliott's interpretation of the language of the sixth Seal—namely, as we have briefly described, that it is a vivid symbolical prophecy of the epoch of the downfall of Paganism as the professed religion of the Roman empire. On this he first quotes the following criticism from Alford: "A more notable instance of inadequate interpretation cannot be imagined. . . . We all know what that imagery means in the rest of Scripture. Any system which requires it to belong to another period than the close approach of the great day of the Lord, stands thereby self-condemned." The author of *The Coming Prince* then adds:

[1] Revelation vi. 12-17 (R.V.).

"What wonder if men scoff at the awful warnings of coming wrath, when they are told that THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH is past, and that it amounted to nothing more than the rout of the Pagan armies before the hosts of Constantine—an event which has been paralleled a thousand times in the history of the world? For let the point at issue be clearly kept in view. If the reign of Constantine, or some other era in the history of Christendom, were appealed to as affording an intermediate fulfilment of the vision, it might pass as a feeble but harmless exposition; but these expositors [*i.e.* as explained in a note, 'the Historical interpreters'] daringly assert that the prophecy has no other scope or meaning."[1]

Without commenting on the style of the above writing, we will endeavour briefly to point out the mistakes, and to show (1) that the application of the language of the sixth Seal to the overthrow of Paganism is justified by other Scriptures; (2) that even Elliott did not assert that the prophecy had no other scope; (3) that to impute such an assertion to the Historical interpreters generally shows a want of acquaintance with their writings, and is quite contrary to fact.

(1) As regards Alford's criticism cited above, we think it can be shown that on this point that learned and able commentator is not quite correct, and that language, the very counterpart of the description of the sixth Seal, is used by the Old Testament prophets to foretell in vivid symbols various crises in history and the overthrow of then existing powers; and that, therefore, such language *does* belong to those periods, though it *also* points on to the close of this dispensation. Thus, for example, we find in Isaiah a passage foretelling the destruction of the city and kingdom of Babylon by the Medes, as admitted by the highest authorities—Delitzsch, *Speaker's Commentary*, etc.—where the very same imagery is employed: "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. . Behold, the day of the Lord cometh [*i.e.* a time when God will specially manifest His powers in judgment], cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners out of it.

[1] *The Coming Prince*, p. 141. Fourth edition.

For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."[1]

Again, Jeremiah thus foretells the overthrow of the Jewish kingdom by the Babylonians: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was waste and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains and they trembled, and all the hills moved to and fro. . . . I beheld, and, lo, . . . all the cities thereof were broken down *at the presence of the Lord, and before His fierce anger*. . . . For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black."[2]

Hosea describes the alarm of the Israelites at the invasion of the Assyrians thus: "And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us," *i.e.* to hide them from the wrath of the conqueror,—words which our Lord applied to the destruction of Jerusalem in His address to sympathising women on His way to be crucified.[3]

Other similar passages might be quoted, but the above are ample to prove our point, which is this. Since sun, moon, and stars are well-known Scriptural emblems of ruling powers, and

[1] Isaiah xiii. 1, 9, 10. Strange to say, this passage is partially quoted by the author of *The Coming Prince*, as if it supported his argument, whereas it is evident that it tells just the other way. He seems to think that "the day of the Lord," spoken of by Isaiah, means the still future great day of God's wrath. Thus he refers to this passage as follows: "The words of the Apocalyptic vision in relation to the great day of Divine wrath (Rev. vi. 17) [in the sixth Seal] are the language of Isaiah xiii. 9, 10, respecting 'the day of the Lord.'" We have explained above that "the day of the Lord," here spoken of by Isaiah, means the manifestation of God's judgment in the overthrow of the Babylonian empire, and if such language might be used to foretell that overthrow, it is clear that what is admitted to be similar language in the sixth Seal might be used to foretell the overthrow of Paganism in the Roman Empire.

Delitzsch says on the above passage in Isaiah: "It is not, indeed, the general judgment which the prophet is depicting here, but a certain historical catastrophe." Similarly Dr. Kay, in *Speaker's Commentary*, remarks: "That the prophecy refers to the capture of Babylon under Cyrus is definitely established." The Medes are mentioned by name as the conquerors.

For a further explanation of the expression, "the day of the Lord," see page 420.

[2] Jeremiah iv. 23-28 (R.V.).

[3] Hosea x. 8; Luke xxiii. 30.

our Lord Himself thus interprets the symbolical meaning of "stars" in the Revelation; and since we find the very same metaphorical expressions employed in the description of the opening of the sixth Seal which were applied to several great crises and revolutions in the world by the Old Testament prophets; and when, further, we find such crises spoken of as "*the day of the Lord*," and "*the presence of the Lord*"; and when we remember that the language of the Old Testament prophets is continually employed in the Revelation; it is a logical conclusion to hold that the strong prophetic metaphors in the similar language of the sixth Seal may be taken to apply to such a great national convulsion as was the overthrow of Paganism as the state religion of the Roman Empire. However grave may have been the spiritual evils mixed up with this change,—and the enemies of Historical interpretation make the most of this—however much the *spirit* of Paganism may have crept in afterwards to Christian worship, no one who knows anything of history can deny that the change itself constituted a tremendous revolution and supreme crisis in the history of the world. Pagan writers themselves spoke of it almost in the very terms of the sixth Seal. "The ruin of the Pagan religion," says Gibbon, "is described by the Sophists as a dreadful and amazing prodigy; which *covered the earth with darkness*, and *restored the ancient dominion of chaos and night*." Indeed, as we have said, it was no less a crisis than it would be now if Christian Churches and the Christian religion were to be put down by the various governments, and Paganism enforced instead.

Bearing in mind, then, the Scriptural use of such metaphors, we are justified in saying, with reference to the language of the sixth Seal, that when a *Christian emperor* sat on the throne of the world, the Pagan *sun* was eclipsed, and when Pagan *governors* and *teachers* were superseded, the *stars* of Paganism fell. So, also, when the Pagan religion which had hitherto overspread the Roman world-empire was ostensibly, and by legal enactments, swept away, the Pagan expanse or *heaven* may be said in corresponding figurative language to have been "removed as a scroll when it is rolled up." And then, too, when heathen Kings and their armies did flee before the standard of the Cross, and when

penalties were enforced upon the public profession of Paganism, so that the heathen population was obliged to hide in country villages,[1] there took place in history something corresponding to the prophetic imagery which St. John saw in vision, of discomfited enemies of every rank calling upon the rocks to hide them from the power and wrath of Christ the Victor. So complete was the overthrow of the Pagan position in the world, and so great the consternation of its votaries at the triumph of Christianity.

It should be noted carefully that the exclamation, that the great day of the wrath of Him that sits upon the throne had come, proceeds from those whom St. John saw in vision thus terror-stricken and convicted of their sin. No one of any heavenly authority is heard to declare that that day has come. No voice from the throne proclaims it. No last trumpet sounds. No celestial beings chant forth their joy and praise. It is only upon the Roman earth, and among these terror-stricken kings that the vision represents this impression as prevailing. In these points a marked contrast is found in the description of the sounding of the seventh Trumpet (Rev. xi. 15–18), and of the pouring out of the seventh Vial (Rev. xvi. 17–21), where the actual coming of Christ is the special object in view.

But if it be thus true that according to the imagery of the Old Testament prophets, and the language of Eastern hyperbole, the description of the sixth Seal may be taken as a symbolic prophecy of the epoch of the overthrow of Paganism, and establishment of Christianity as the professed religion of the Roman Empire,—an epoch which followed in due order of succession after the five previous epochs denoted by the five previous Seals,—it is equally true, as we have already indicated, that the language also points on to a far greater fulfilment at the time of the Second Coming, when the Lord Jesus shall overthrow every form of error, and pour out judgment upon opposing enemies, and establish, not merely as a profession but as a glorious reality, the Christian faith throughout the world. That this is so is proved by the fact that our Lord Himself employed the same prophetic imagery to describe His Second Advent in His prophecy on the Mount of

[1] Hence the name Pagan for heathen, from the Latin *pagus*, a village.

Olives. Whence we may see that, when foretelling certain great overthrows and national convulsions in Old Testament times, the prophets were inspired to use language which pointed on to the far greater overthrow of enemies, and to the infinitely more important crisis in the world, that will take place when Christ comes to set up His Kingdom.[1] Just in the same way the prophetic vision of the sixth Seal recorded by St. John, and relating in the first place to the overthrow of Paganism, is described in language that will find its complete fulfilment at the crisis of the Second Advent. And as those Old Testament judgments were feeble types of the judgments to be poured out when Christ shall come to overthrow His enemies, so the downfall of Paganism and establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman world-empire was a type,—miserably imperfect, it is true,—of the grand realisation that will be manifested when Christ shall appear to put down all false religions, and to reign with His true Church over a regenerate world.

(2) Our second point is to show that even Elliott admits the further reference of the language of the sixth Seal to the time of the end; for while he emphasises the application of it to the downfall of Paganism, he says, nevertheless, that this convulsion may be regarded as *a type of the final catastrophe*, in which case, of course, it follows that the language describing the sixth Seal *points on* to the latter event for its final fulfilment. The words of Elliott are as follows. After comparing the earthquake of the sixth Seal with that of the seventh Vial, which, he says, is "allowed on all hands to be the description of the great *final* political revolution," he adds "the *former* may be possibly in a certain sense typical of the *latter*; in the same way that a *less* event *of the same character*, is often in Scripture typical of a *greater* following."[2]

We must, however, once more draw attention here to the common error of Futurists in identifying the Historical system with every detail of Elliott's exposition; so that if in some par-

[1] This feature of Old Testament prophecy is pointed out by Cheyne on Isaiah, also by Birks and other able commentators.

[2] *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. i., page 251, fifth edition.

ticulars they can prove, or think they prove, him wrong, they claim to have overthrown the truth of the system. Doubtless Elliott's great work is the most complete and learned exposition of the Historical view; but there are many eminent writers belonging to that school who differ from him in several points of detail. Moreover, as we have previously remarked, the study of prophecy, like other sciences, is *progressive*, and we may well believe that Elliott himself, were he living, might revise and modify some particulars of his exposition.

(3) Our third point is, that to charge the Historical interpretation with denying all reference of the language of the sixth Seal to the final convulsion at the end of this dispensation, is a lamentable mistake, and palpably contrary to fact. We have shown this even with regard to Elliott. And so far are Historical interpreters generally from denying the reference of the sixth Seal to the great crisis of the end, that some of the ablest of them expressly so explain it, as, for instance, Birks, Bickersteth, and Lange.

No one has more clearly upheld the truth of the Historical method of interpretation, or more convincingly disproved the tenets of the Futurist school, than Professor Birks, whose earlier works are now unfortunately out of print. No one, for example, has more ably shown that the ten toes of the image and the ten horns of the fourth beast in Daniel, refer to that subdivision of the Roman Empire into separate kingdoms, which took place after the fall of the Old Empire, and has continued ever since, and which was the epoch of the rise of the "little horn" or Antichrist. No one has more distinctly stated that St. Paul's Man of Sin was revealed when the "hindrance" of the Pagan Roman Empire was taken out of the way. No one has more clearly proved that the mass of the Book of Revelation covers the whole space between the time of St. John and the Second Coming, and refers to a succession of great events in the world during that period. Nor has any one more forcibly commented upon the ultra-literalism of the Futurist school, or more logically and completely refuted the arguments of its chief supporters than he has done in his *First Elements of Prophecy*. This prominent

champion of the Historical system of interpretation, in his scheme of the Revelation, distinctly applies "the day of wrath" in the sixth Seal to the time of judgments to be poured out on the world in immediate connection with the coming of our Lord. The reader, therefore, may judge of the value of the criticism of the Futurist author from whom we have quoted, when, in allusion to Historical expositors, he says of them that they "daringly assert" that the prophecy of the sixth Seal has no other scope or meaning than the downfall of Paganism.

Birks differs from Elliott in several points of Historical exposition. In his scheme of the Revelation he gives a wider and spiritual interpretation of the Seals, according to which the period occupied by them ranges from the time of St. John up to the actual coming of Christ, which he considers to be the point reached by the pause at the opening of the seventh Seal, after which a fresh series of visions, that of the Trumpets, begins. According to his view the Seals are intended to foretell successive stages of "the decline of the visible Church from its first state of purity to one of intense corruption and opposition to the truth, before the coming of Christ." At the same time *he admits the truth of Elliott's narrower and more definite interpretation*, referring them to marked epochs in the decline and fall of the Pagan Roman Empire; only, he says, "it needs to be completed by the wider view."[1]

It has been well pointed out by Lange that such difference

[1] *Thoughts on Sacred Prophecy*, pp. 46, 130. According to this wider and spiritual application the Seals range as follows. Seal I. Victories of the Church Militant, A.D. 70. Seal II. Discord of the Church, A.D. 324. Seal III. Spiritual famine of the Church, A.D. 533. Seal IV. Spiritual desolation of the Church, A.D. 1073. Seal V. Era of the Martyrs, A.D. 1438. Seal VI. Signs of wrath and "the day of wrath," A.D. 1789. Seal VII. The return of Christ.

As to this spiritual interpretation, we can only say that it *may* be so, for God's Word is deep. But it labours under this strong objection, that it requires the emblem of *the horse and rider* to mean in the one case the Roman Empire, in the other the Church of Christ, things totally different. Such a twofold interpretation as this introduces confusion and uncertainty. And it seems safer and simpler to keep to the view advocated by Elliott and other Historical interpreters as the true one, with the modification, on which we would lay stress, that the language of the sixth Seal points on to the time immediately preceding our Lord's coming for its complete fulfilment.

of opinion amongst Historical writers, who are agreed upon the main principles of interpretation, is no argument whatever against the general truth of the system. It is a necessary consequence of the veil of mystery which God has seen fit to throw over His prophetic Word. Moreover, if it were an objection, it would lie equally against all other systems of interpretation, that of Futurists included, since their respective advocates also differ widely from each other in points of detail.

We trust that the objection based upon the language of the sixth Seal has now been completely removed, and that the charge, brought by Futurists against the Historical interpretation, of denying the ultimate reference of those words to the crisis of the Lord's coming, has been shown to be an utterly mistaken one. The Historical interpretation *does* hold that the language of the sixth Seal points on for its *final* fulfilment to the great crisis of the end. But it likewise proves, as we have endeavoured to show, that the crisis of the fall of Paganism as the religion of the Roman world-empire is also indicated as being the particular stage in history reached by the sixth Seal, the previous Seals having foreshadowed a succession of previous epochs in that Empire; whilst a further succession of great epochs, reaching to the end of this dispensation, is unfolded by the further series of the Trumpets and the Vials, as will be explained later on, when we come to the record of those visions.

Here, as bearing upon the difficult question of the *structure* of the Book of Revelation, we may notice that, taking the three series of seven-fold visions, the *Seals*, the *Trumpets*, and the *Vials*, as signifying together a long succession of God's dealings in judgment throughout the present dispensation, we find that both at the close of the *Seals* and of the *Trumpets* there was a special vision presented to St. John, which, besides indicating the historical epoch that would be reached in the actual succession of events up to that particular time, also pointed on to the triumphant issue of the whole course of events which would be brought about at the coming of Christ,—to the time which would not actually be reached till the close of the *Vials*.

We can see an obvious reason, too, for such a structure,

because thus throughout the long course of time during which these visions were being fulfilled, though the pages of the Revelation may have seemed obscure to those who searched "what time or what manner of time the Spirit did signify" by these mysterious symbols, there was at least this made evident to them by the recurring language at the close of each series of visions, that, however dark might be the clouds of judgment by which they were surrounded, in due time they would result in the brightness of Christ's coming, the overthrow of His enemies, and the setting up of His glorious kingdom.

We have already seen this feature illustrated in the series of the Seals, and have shown that the sixth Seal first of all signified the overthrow of Paganism as the state religion of the Roman world-empire, but that it also points on to the overthrow of all false religions, and to the enthronement of Christ and His Church at His second coming. We shall see later on that this same feature characterises the series of the Trumpets, and that the climax thus anticipatively indicated in these two series is fully reached in the Vials.

We believe that this *resumptive* method, as it has been called,—that is to say, *an anticipatory glance onwards* to the end of the dispensation at the close of a series of visions and then a *going back* to take up the thread of the history of events at the point to which it had been previously carried, in order to give a further and fuller revelation,—is the true key of the structure of these seven-fold series, and, indeed, of the whole book of Revelation. This is the principle adopted by Birks and Alford, though they differ in matters of detail. The application of it to Elliott's learned work on the Revelation, in the way we have endeavoured briefly to indicate, removes the objections that have been brought against the *continuous* Historical interpretation as expounded by him, more especially with regard to the language of the sixth Seal.

Of course all this detail of structure could not be expected to have been clear to those living in the earlier portion of our dispensation. We may say that it was not intended that it should be so, for the reason that we have previously alluded to, namely, that it does not appear to have been God's will that the weary

length of this dispensation should have been known beforehand. Still, as Elliott well remarks, there were parts in the great chart of prophecy, as revealed in the Old and New Testament, of which they could form a sufficiently clear idea to be a source of comfort to them. And the uncertainty and obscurity, which prevailed as to other parts, helped to keep alive the hope and expectation that the longed-for crisis of the coming of the Lord might be nearer than they thought, and might possibly soon arrive.

The opening of the seventh Seal is not narrated till the beginning of chapter viii., the two episodical visions of chapter vii. coming between. When we come to consider that chapter, it will be found that the loosing of this Seal is not followed by a symbolic vision foreshadowing some historical epoch or crisis, like the previous Seals. Consistently with the meaning of the symbol of a "seal," which we have previously explained, the opening of this last Seal only discloses that there are to be yet further *delays*, more things that must first come to pass before the "book" manifesting the completion of God's purposes can be laid open to view. When this Seal is loosed, as we shall see later on, when we come to Revelation viii., there is a pause—"silence in heaven." The end is not yet reached. There is to be further delay. In this way the loosing of the seventh Seal develops the fact that a long series of other epochs must follow, to be foreshadowed under other symbols, those of the *Trumpets*, and those of the *Vials*.

In dealing with the *Seals*, Futurists are compelled to admit that the horses and riders must be interpreted symbolically. Thus Dr. Seiss asks: "What are we to see in these horses but earthly images of the swift, invisible, resistless power of God, going forth upon the proud, guilty, and unbelieving world?"[1] In accordance, however, with the rest of their system, though some admit that the things foreshadowed have been happening all along, they throw forward the fulfilment of the visions of bloodshed, distress, death, and persecution, to the last few years

[1] Seiss on the *Revelation*, p. 141.

of this dispensation—the supposed last week, according to their view, of Daniel's Seventy Weeks, a view which we have endeavoured to show to be quite erroneous. Some of them interpret the first Seal as an *anticipatory* vision of the coming of Christ. Others say with Dr. Seiss that "the white horse, and its crowned rider, and bloodless conquests, indicate mighty moral victories for the heavenly kingdom, wrought by the spirit of judgment." This is to take place, together with the other judgments, according to their interpretation, during the Great Tribulation; and the persecution of the fifth Seal is that which is to come to pass under the personal Antichrist whom they expect. They of course deny the reference of the sixth Seal to the fall of Paganism, and limit the description to the crisis of the Second Advent.

We trust that in establishing the truth of the Historical interpretation of the *Seals* we have proved the Futurist view to be a mistaken one. The error of their system will come out yet more clearly in the more definite and detailed series of visions that follow.

Before we come to the consideration of the meaning of the *Trumpets* in chapter viii., we must, following the order of the Revelation itself, first notice the two episodical visions in chapter vii. These are *anticipatory* visions the nature of which we have previously explained.[1] Like a gleam of light upon the horizon of a stormy sky, these visions of comfort are introduced before the dark judgments of the *Trumpets* are entered upon. They are calculated to sustain hope and to point us to a glorious future.

The first thing to be noticed about these two visions is the marked *contrast* between them. It is highly important to bear this in mind in order to understand their meaning. We shall see that there are three important points in which these visions stand contrasted with each other. (1) The first vision is viewed as taking place on the earthly scene spread out below; the second is contemplated in the heavenly scene above. (2) The first is of a company limited in number and able to be counted; the second is of "a great number which no man could number" (*v.* 9).

[1] See p. 266.

(3) The first is of a company elected out of one peculiar nation, the tribes of "the children of Israel"; the second is described as being "out of every nation, and of all tribes, and peoples, and tongues" (*v.* 9).

Bearing these points of contrast in mind, let us proceed to examine the meaning. Various interpretations of these two visions have been given, but that of Alford and other high authorities seems to be the true one. According to this view the first vision, that of the sealing of the 144,000 out of all the tribes of Israel, refers to the *Church of the elect during the present dispensation*, while the second vision applies to *the whole multitude of those who will ultimately be found amongst the number of the saved.*

The scene of the first vision is, as we have said, contemplated by St. John upon the earthly landscape over which the angelic agents of the *sealing* go forth. By this sealing with a particular mark we must understand, not actual immunity from undergoing the storms of trial and woe that were to sweep over the world, but that it was a token of God's special ownership and watchful care over them in the midst of it all. It is as when our Lord said to His disciples, in view of coming trouble and persecution even unto death, "There shall not an hair of your head perish." It indicated that their highest interests were safe, and their future reward certain, whatever might happen to them. As regards the *principle* involved, and the meaning of the sealing or marking, the application may be taken in a general sense, as illustrating God's dealings with His people through all time. But, as regards the actual *occasion* of the presentation of the vision to St. John, it is evident that there is a *special* reference of this vision to the judgments of the *Trumpets* which immediately follow. It is in accordance with this that the first two Trumpets *after the completion of the sealing* are described as having effect on the *earth*, the *sea*, and the *trees*, which are mentioned in the commission to the sealing angel. Thus, as is frequent in the Revelation, this vision is one of comfort, *preparatory* to visions of judgment upon apostate Christendom, which were afterwards to be presented to the eye of the prophet. It should be further noted that though all God's children, all the saved, are under His protection, those

here specially singled out as the subjects of the distinguishing mark in this vision are the limited number of *the elect.*

The number 144,000, being 12,000 out of each tribe, is, according to the general character of the Revelation, *metaphorical.* Twelve is a number which carries with it the idea of completeness with reference to the *Church.* Lange well remarks: "Twelve is the number of the *foundation*, the *mediation*, and the *consummation* of the Kingdom of God." We see this brought out in a marked manner in Revelation xxi., where God's completed purposes with regard to His Church are symbolically described. There are mentioned in that vision twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, with the names of the twelve tribes, twelve angels, and twelve foundation stones, with the names of the twelve apostles. Twelve times twelve thousand is, therefore, an appropriate symbol to prefigure the *completed number* of the whole body of the elect of this dispensation, to which period, as we have said, the vision more especially refers.

The Futurist literal system of interpreting this vision throws everything into confusion. Not recognising the *anticipatory* nature of these two visions, which we have previously explained, Dr. Seiss remarks: "These 144,000 Jews can by no possibility represent the glorified company of the whole Church. . . . For the Elders and Living Ones are glorified, and have received their crowns, before these 144,000 have even been sealed on earth."[1] What we have already said shows the mistake of this argument. We have pointed out in our explanation of Revelation iv. that the vision of the Elders and Living Ones is an *anticipatory* vision. It forms the standing scenery, so to speak, which remains in the background throughout the whole drama of the Revelation, and is referred to from time to time in relation to other visions. It represents the consummation of Christ's redemptive work with regard to man and creation generally. While the mass of the book, including this vision of the sealing of the 144,000, refers to what takes place *in the course of this dispensation* leading up to the glorious consummation prefigured, as we have said, in the anticipatory vision.

The Futurist author above quoted erroneously proceeds to

[1] Seiss on the *Revelation*, p. 189.

argue that the vision means that exactly 12,000 out of each of the twelve tribes of the literal Israelitish nation, who shall be found living on earth after the taking up of the saints of the first resurrection, will be sealed with some visible mark as a security through the judgments of the Great Tribulation! As to this literal method of interpreting Jewish symbolism in the book of Revelation, Lange well remarks: "So far as the Jews are concerned, those commentators are entirely at odds with the text who teach that the literal Jews are meant here." In proof of the metaphorical meaning he aptly cites the *New Jerusalem* of chapter xxi., which cannot possibly denote a Jewish city, and also the use of the term *Jews* in the letters to the seven Churches to denote the very opposite of Judaists, namely, the true spiritual Israel. This metaphor is also found in the Epistles, as when St. Paul speaks of "the Israel of God" and "the Jerusalem that is above."[1] Since, therefore, the Israel of the Revelation is a symbol of a peculiar nation, the people of God, it follows that an election out of all Israel, which is what is spoken of in this vision, symbolises an election out of all those who are God's people, a limited number chosen out of all those who will ultimately be saved to eternal life. It is this elect company who are singled out for distinction in this vision as being the special objects of God's marked favour and care.

The same company of 144,000 are seen later on in the Book of Revelation (chap. xiv. 1–5) gathered round the Lamb on Mount Zion. That the two companies of 144,000 are identical has been shown by Alford, Lange, and other able commentators. They both symbolise the Church of the elect, but with this difference, that the present vision pictures the Church in its *militant* condition, and refers to the whole of this dispensation, while the later vision of Revelation xiv. refers to the *end* of the dispensation when the warfare is finished, and pictures the Church as *triumphant*.[2]

[1] See Galatians vi. 16, iv. 26, and compare 1 Peter ii. 9. The point is also very clearly demonstrated both by Alford and Elliott. The metaphorical use of the term Israel was familiar to the Christians of St. John's time.

[2] It should be mentioned that some Historical writers explain the symbolism of the 144,000 somewhat differently. Assuming that the New Jerusalem of

The second vision of chapter vii. has to do with the heavenly things of the future, and accordingly it is beheld by St. John in the *heavenly* scene, through the "door opened," as we have before explained; whereas the previous vision of the sealing of the 144,000 referred to what would take place on earth, and was therefore contemplated by St. John upon the *earthly* scene. We noticed also another important difference, namely, that while the vision of the sealing refers to a *numerable* company, a limited but complete number gathered out of one particular sphere, the second vision is one of an *innumerable* company gathered out of a variety of spheres: "After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands." [1]

If the vision of the sealing may be said to denote the Church of the elect guaranteed to ride safely through all storms, this second vision represents the time when the storms will be a thing of the past, when not only the Church of the elect "chosen and faithful," but all the saved, through all ages and all dispensations, will be anchored in the haven of eternal rest. Or, to vary the simile, and to employ that which is obviously suggested by the inspired description of the multitudes as having "palms in their hands," it represents what was symbolised by the Feast of

chapter xxi. is a city in the shape of a perfect cube (which Alford shows to be not required by the language, and is, indeed, an impossible conception), they take 144,000 to be a section of that cube, *i.e.*, a section of the Church at any given period of its earthly history. Hence they regard the 144,000 here to refer to the generation after the fall of paganism, and the *sealing* to contain a special allusion to the truth about *baptism*, with regard to which so much error prevailed at that era. Similarly, they take the 144,000 of Revelation xiv. to refer to a later section of the Church, namely, that of the time of the Reformation. With all due respect to these writers, we cannot but think such an explanation to be highly artificial and improbable. Moreover, as Alford points out, the analogy of the marking in Ezekiel ix. indicates security amidst coming judgment, rather than the truth about baptism, as being the object of the sealing. Those who hold the view just mentioned take the innumerable multitude of the second vision as referring to the whole number of this same body of believers, viz., the elect Church. We shall endeavour to show that this is a mistaken interpretation.

[1] Revelation vii. 9 (R.V.).

Tabernacles, which was the grand harvest-home of the Jewish year, when *all* the fruits had been gathered in.

Various crops in the Holy Land were gathered from time to time as they ripened. The *grain* harvest, corresponding to the 144,000, or Church of the Elect, had a special feast assigned to it, namely, the Feast of *Pentecost*, also called, as being the earliest harvest, the Feast of *First-fruits*. It symbolised, as we shall presently show, the First Resurrection. But the Feast of *Tabernacles* represented the *conclusion* of the whole cycle of the sacred year. It was celebrated with waving of "palms," and was the time of the greatest rejoicing of all, when not only the grain but all the fruits of the year were safely garnered.[1] It exactly corresponds, therefore, to the occasion symbolised in this second vision of chapter vii., when the *end* of the long year of salvation will have been reached, and the second or General Resurrection will have taken place, and *all* the fruits of Christ's redemptive work will have been brought safely home, when not only the saved of every nation and tribe from the time of Abel to the end of the present dispensation, but also the grand harvest of the Millennial age, that time when "all shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest," shall be gathered in. The very term "saved" is one applied by agriculturists to their crops. Hence the countless throng are seen, in this second vision of chapter vii., waving their palm branches like the Jews of old at their Feast of Tabernacles, and rejoicing in the song of the Divine Harvest-home. The words of that song are given in the 10th verse: "Salvation unto our God [*i.e.*, Let our salvation be ascribed unto God] which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." Thus we notice that as the song in the vision of chapter iv. was of *Creation*, and that in chapter v. of *Redemption*, so here the key-note at the beginning of the song is *Salvation*—"Safe home, safe home at last."

There is one point in the description of this final and total ingathering of the saved which must be particularly noticed in order to prevent misunderstanding. They are spoken of as

[1] See Exodus xxiii. 16. "And the feast of harvest [*Pentecost*], the first-fruits of thy labours . . . and the feast of ingathering [*Tabernacles*] which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field."

"they which come out of great tribulation," literally "the tribulation the great one." This expression has led many, especially Futurist expositors, to explain the tribulation here alluded to as being that special time of trouble still in the future which Scripture tells us will close the present dispensation. But an examination of the context and a comparison of the previous use in the Revelation of the expression "the tribulation" show that this cannot be what is meant here. It has been pointed out by Alford, and other able expositors, that although the Great Tribulation at the close of the age is *included* in it, yet the expression cannot be taken as referring exclusively to that, but rather that it means *the great tribulation of this life in all ages*, out of which the whole number of the redeemed are saved. Hence the popular view that has so often brought comfort to enduring souls, that the beautiful description in the closing verses of this seventh chapter of the Revelation refers to the final blessedness of all the redeemed, is the true one. Hence, also, we can trace a further correspondence of the words of this passage with the prophetic meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. As on that occasion the Israelites dwelling in booths were led to look back to the time of *the long tribulation* of their nation encamped in the wilderness, and, with rejoicing and waving of palm branches, to praise God for having brought them safely through it all, so, in this vision, the multitudes of the redeemed look back upon the long pilgrimage of their earthly life in the flesh, "*the great tribulation*" out of which they are spoken of as having come, and as they stand before the throne, with palm branches in their hand, they thank God for having brought them safely through the wilderness of the world to the enjoyment of eternal life in the heavenly Canaan.[1]

[1] "The great tribulation" spoken of by our Lord in Matthew xxiv. 21, 29, which, though containing a primary reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, points on to the time of trouble foretold in Daniel xii. 1, in connection with the Second Advent, is but an acute and final stage of the great tribulation of all ages.

Stress is often laid upon the article in this passage of the Revelation,—"*the* tribulation,"—as if it must refer to that final tribulation; but that this is not so is shown by chapter i. 9, where St. John speaks of himself as "partaker with you in *the* tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus." Here *the* tribulation spoken of cannot possibly be the final tribulation, but

As a right understanding of these two visions of Revelation vii. is important, it may be well to add, in confirmation of the explanation we have given, some remarks of Dr. Craven, editor of Lange's *Commentary on the Revelation*, and one of the ablest and most learned writers on the subject. He first identifies the 144,000 of the *sealed* with the same number in chap. xiv., saying that "the *number*, and the almost certain reference to the seal upon the forehead, in chap. xiv. 1, place this beyond peradventure." He then adds—"But, if this identification be correct, then the *sealed* constitute *a peculiar portion of the redeemed.* . . . 'They are the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb' (chap. xiv. 3–5). This fact seems also to be indicated by the *number*, which is one of *perfection.* . . . The second vision contemplates, not (or not *merely*) the first-fruits, but the whole body of the redeemed. . . . The manifold points of difference may be arranged as follows: the one was innumerable from all nations, *the whole body of the redeemed;* the other was a (comparatively) small definite number from Israel (the Church), the *first-fruits.* It may be asked if another point of difference is not suggested by the 'standing' of ver. 9. There the *general throng* are represented as *standing before the throne*, but the promise to the *faithful* of the Church is that they themselves shall be enthroned with Jesus." [1]

From what has been said it will be seen that the 144,000 and the innumerable company of chap. vii. correspond respectively to the "elders" and to the "living creatures" of chapter iv., but with this difference, that the latter symbols are more comprehensive in their meaning. The "elders" include the Old Testament saints of the first resurrection as well as those of the New, while the 144,000 both in Revelation vii. and xiv. seem to

must mean the tribulation associated with the kingdom of heaven, the great tribulation of all ages as already explained. The epithet *great* in our present passage, therefore, denotes measure and extent, and, as Alford points out, applies to the great probation of life on earth, the sum total of the "many tribulations" through which we are told in Ephesians "we must enter into the kingdom of God." That this extended meaning of the phrase, as explained by Alford above, is the true sense here has been also shown by Bengel, Lange, Fausset, and many others of the best commentators.

[1] Lange, *The Revelation*, p. 193.

refer only or, at all events, more especially to those of the New Testament Church, the elect of the present dispensation, with which the Revelation is chiefly concerned,—in other words, to *the Bride of Christ*. It is held by many that there is good Scriptural reason for assigning a somewhat higher rank or privilege to the New Testament Church of the elect than to that of the Old. Thus the two correspond to the description of the royal Bride and the "virgins her companions" in the beautiful Millennial prophecy of Psalm xlv. Both together constitute the company of the saints of the first resurrection who will be raised to share in the reign of Christ, and both are included in the symbol of the "Elders."

Similarly the four "living creatures" are a more comprehensive symbol than the innumerable company of the redeemed in the second vision of chap. vii. For the "living creatures," as we have explained, include in their meaning a restoration of sentient creation generally, while the innumerable company refers only to mankind.

To avoid confusion in the mind of the reader it may be well to point out that in this second vision, and in some other visions, as, for instance, in that of the 144,000 of Revelation xiv., there is presented to the eye of the prophet *both the symbol and the thing signified*. He sees the symbols of the twenty-four *elders* and the four *living creatures*, the *standing* scenery, as we have said, in the background of the drama of the Revelation; and also he sees at the same time the two companies who are signified in the meaning of these symbols, namely, the elect Church of the New Testament and the innumerable multitude, or main body of the redeemed.

Here it may be interesting to notice a little more fully how this vision, when taken in connection with St. Paul's express statement about the order of resurrection in 1 Corinthians xv., throws light upon the typical meaning of the three great Hebrew Feasts, with regard to which there is often much confusion of interpretation. It can be shown that the *gathering of the fruits of the earth* as commemorated in these Feasts had a symbolic reference to *resurrection*. This life is the *sowing* time, the time of

probation. The resurrection time is the time of *harvest* when the result is secured.

There are three resurrections spoken of in Scripture which correspond to the three Feasts:—(1) THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. This corresponds in order of time to the Feast of *Passover*. It is well known that our Lord's resurrection was symbolised in that Feast by the offering of the Wave-sheaf composed of choice ears of corn gathered as the *firstfruits* of the grain harvest. As Christ's *death* is linked by St. Paul with the Passover in the words "our passover also hath been sacrificed even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast"; so His *resurrection* is alluded to, as symbolised by the Wave-sheaf of *firstfruits* at that same Feast, in the words of the well-known chapter on the resurrection:—"Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, *the firstfruits of them that are asleep*." It was on "the morrow after the sabbath" that the ceremony of gathering the first ripe ears of corn and presenting the Wave-sheaf before the Lord was performed. It was on this same day, on the first Easter morning, that Christ rose from the dead and fulfilled the type.[1] (2) THE RESURRECTION OF THE ELECT, *i.e.*, the Church of the firstborn, or Church of the firstfruits, both these expressions indicating *more to follow*. This resurrection will take place at the beginning of the Millennium. It is called, in Revelation xx. 5, "the first resurrection" as distinguished from the second or general resurrection which will not take place till the end of the Millennium. This "first resurrection," as we have shown, corresponds to the second Feast, that of *Pentecost* or *Weeks*, which took place seven weeks after the Passover, and which was also called the Feast of *Firstfruits*, in relation to other fruits of the earth to be afterwards gathered in. This resurrection of the elect was typified by the offering of the two loaves, presented at the Feast of Pentecost before God, in token that all the *grain* harvest was now gatherep in. We have explained that Pentecost was also called the Feast of "*firstfruits*:" similarly those raised at this resurrection, the 144,000, are spoken of in Revelation xiv. 4 as "firstfruits unto God," in relation to those who are to follow later. (3) THE

[1] Compare Lev. xxiii. 10–14; 1 Cor. v. 7, xv. 20 (R.V.).

GENERAL RESURRECTION at the end of the Millennium, described in Revelation xx. 11–15, when all the saved who have not been raised before, all whose names shall be found written in the "book of life" then to be opened, will attain to their resurrection life. This general resurrection corresponds to the Feast of *Tabernacles*. That Feast took place at the *end* of the sacred year, when not only the grain harvest but all the other fruits of the year had been safely garnered. Just so this final resurrection at the end of the dispensation will be the time when all the saved through all past ages will have been safely gathered in, and will rejoice together in the consummation of Christ's redemptive work. Moreover, as the *vintage*, the special metaphor in Scripture for judgement inflicted upon the enemies of God, was included in the commemoration of the Feast of *Tabernacles*, so, also, the punishment of the wicked will form a conspicuous feature of the final resurrection and judgment, of which the Feast was, as we have shown,[1] the type.

We need not attempt to enter here upon the difficult and disputed question of defining exactly who they are amongst the saved who will constitute the body of the elect, the Bride of Christ, the firstfruits, the rulers in Christ's kingdom, the saints of the first resurrection; and, on the other hand, who they are who will not be raised till the general resurrection at the end of Christ's reign. We know that to be amongst the former ought to be the object of the Christian life and the Christian hope. We know that this is the prize of the high calling to which Paul describes himself as eagerly pressing forward "if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead."[2] And, further, from our Lord's solemn exhortations in his discourse on the Mount of Olives in connection with this very subject, Matthew xxiv. and xxv., we know this much at least, that, if we would make sure of this prize, we must seek by His grace to live the loving, watchful, and earnest Christian life, as opposed to the half-hearted and slothful one. As to the final resurrection we have already remarked that amongst the innumerable multitudes whose names will then be "found written in the book of life" are

[1] See p. 308.

[2] Philippians iii. 11, literally "the out-resurrection from amongst the dead,"

to be reckoned those who will constitute the great harvest of the Millennial age, and also, perhaps we may add, those amongst the heathen world through all time, who, in accordance with God's plans of infinite love and wisdom and justice, though having never heard of Christ, may nevertheless have so far listened to the voice of God speaking in their hearts and consciences, as to be found accepted through His atoning sacrifice, and so be included amongst those who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." [1]

And now, by way of summing up, let us just notice how exactly all this agrees with St. Paul's well known statement concerning the order of resurrection, in his special declaration on the subject: "each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits [corresponding to the *Passover*, when the first ripe ears of grain were gathered]; then [*i.e.* next in order] they that are Christ's at His coming [corresponding to the Feast of *Pentecost*, when the gathering of the whole of the grain harvest, the harvest of firstfruits, Exodus xxiii. 16, was celebrated]; then [*i.e.* next after that] cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father,"—the end, that is to say, of all the dispensations, the time at the end of Christ's Millennial kingdom, when the final general resurrection will take place, as is clearly revealed in Revelation xx. This general resurrection at "the end" corresponds, as we have already explained, to the Feast of *Tabernacles* "at the end of the year," which celebrated the fact that the time had come when not only the grain but all fruits were gathered in. The resurrections will be further explained when we come to Revelation xx.[2]

[1] This hope has been cherished amongst believers of the greatest piety and learning, such as Bishop Butler and many others. It is one of the secret things not clearly revealed but resting upon brief hints in Scripture, as, for instance, in the early chapters of Romans. We know that the God of all the earth will do right. See further on this point pp. 429, 462.

[2] In the above quotation from 1 Corinthians xv. 23 the punctuation (which, as is well known, is an arbitrary matter, not being marked in the original MSS.) has been slightly altered from the R.V. in order to bring out the meaning more clearly: and it should be remembered that the Greek words translated "then" mean "next in order," implying an interval between. The same word is used to express the order of the post-resurrection appearances at the beginning of the chapter. The word does not show whether the interval is to be long or short. That is determined by the circumstances of the case.

There is a common explanation of the prophetic meaning of the three great Hebrew Feasts which misses the very point of comparison and introduces confusion. According to this view the Passover rightly corresponds to the resurrection of Christ; but the Feast of Pentecost is explained as if it typified the first-fruits of the Spirit, as shown in the conversion of the multitudes at Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was given; while the Feast of Tabernacles is made to correspond with the raising of the saints of the first resurrection at the beginning of the Millennium. This explanation seems doubly wrong. In the first place it misses the point that all three of these Feasts refer to actual resurrection from the grave, whereas at Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was given there was no such resurrection. In the second place it leaves out of sight the glorious harvest-home, including the results of the Millennial age, at the end of all the dispensations, which, as we have shown, is the true meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles "at the end of the year."

Commentators have been puzzled to account for the Feast of Tabernacles being the only one retained during the Millennium (Zech. xiv. 18). The reason is that it will be the only one that remains to be antitypically fulfilled.

The Trumpets.

Having now explained the meaning of the anticipatory visions of Revelation vii.—episodes of consolation, as they have been called, in view of coming judgments, let us now, following the order of the Revelation, proceed to notice the opening of the seventh Seal at the beginning of chapter viii., and the vision of the Incense Angel, serving to introduce the *Trumpets* which follow.

The opening of the seventh Seal, marks the beginning of a fresh series of visions. St. John says: "And when he opened the seventh Seal, there followed a silence in heaven, about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets." A mystery is obviously thrown over the actual meaning of the

In the present instance it is decided by the special information on the subject in Revelation xx. 6, 7, where it is stated as 1,000 years.

"silence in heaven," and we need not attempt, therefore, positively to define it. There seems good reason to believe that the half-hour during which it lasted refers to half an hour of the day occupied in revealing these visions to St. John. In our previous brief reference to the opening of this Seal (p. 302), it was suggested that this pause might be intended to signify that there must be yet further *delay* before the consummation, and that a further series of visions was about to be unfolded. Regarded from the point of time reached by the sixth Seal in its application to the Constantine era, the silence has been held by Elliott and others to mean the brief period of quietude, noticed by historians, which took place before the barbarian irruptions from the North began. By other writers, when regarded from the point of view of the more complete fulfilment of the sixth Seal at the coming of Christ, the "silence" at the opening of the seventh Seal has been explained as referring to the beginning of the *peace* of the kingdom of God. Under any case it introduces, as we have said, the development of a new series of visions to be given to St. John, revealing other things that "must needs come to pass" before the end can be reached.

The introductory vision of the Incense Angel which immediately follows the "silence" serves to indicate a reason for the judgments to be poured out under the next sevenfold series, that of the Trumpets. At the point of time reached in the course of history which we have previously traced in the opening of the Seals, that is to say, in the age after the fall of Paganism under Constantine and his successors, which we have shown to be symbolised by the sixth Seal, the corrupt doctrines of the *mediatorship of the saints* and of *the sacrifice of the Mass* had become grievously prevalent in the Church. Hence the vision of the Incense Angel, symbolising Christ in *His sole* mediatorial and priestly character between man and God, represented by way of contrast the *truth* on this vital subject. This vision was in all probability presented to St. John in the *heavenly* scene, which he contemplated from his standpoint of observation, looking upward through the "door opened." The angel first stood "at the altar," *i.e.* the great altar of sacrifice, and then taking coals of fire from that altar, typical of the *sole atoning merits of Christ's sacrifice*, went to the golden altar,

and mingling incense, typical of the intercession of Christ *the only Mediator*, added it "unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Thus the merits and intercession of Christ are prominently set forth in this vision as constituting the one and only ground of acceptance before God. "The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand." [1]

Immediately after this symbolic representation of the truth on this essential point there followed the prophetic symbolism of judgment for the corruption of this truth. The angel in the vision returned to the great altar of sacrifice with his censer, "and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightning, and an earthquake." Truth received leads to life; but truth rejected or perverted leads to judgment. Thus the vision of the Incense Angel is introductory to the manifestation of God's wrath upon apostate Christendom, as symbolised by the sounding of the Trumpets of judgment. These take up the thread of events after the fall of Paganism, which was indicated, as we have said, by the sixth Seal, and foretell a succession of marked judgments showing God's displeasure at the corruption of truth which had rapidly developed in the newly Christianised empire.

St. John now looks downwards from his point of observation, and contemplates the scenes of the Trumpets portrayed upon the landscape of the Roman earth spread out below him.

The first four Trumpets symbolised four successive Gothic invasions of the Roman Empire of the West, as we shall presently explain. Here, as elsewhere in the Revelation, the language of the Old Testament prophets furnishes a key to the meaning of the symbols. They frequently employed the figure of sounding a trumpet to foretell a coming invasion as a punishment for apostasy. Thus Hosea prophesied concerning the Assyrian invasion of apostate Israel: "Set the trumpet to thy mouth. As as an eagle he cometh against the house of the Lord: because they have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law." [2] Just so the Trumpets in the Revelation symbolically fore-

[1] Rev. viii. 3, 4. [2] Hosea viii. 1.

told invasions by enemies as a punishment for the apostasy of Christendom.

At this point it may be well to give some weighty remarks by the learned and cautious expositor whom we have previously quoted, Dr. Craven, the editor of Lange's *Commentary on the Revelation*. Speaking of the Trumpets he says: "After a careful examination of the different views that have been presented I have been constrained to the conclusion that the scheme of interpretation advocated by Elliott and Barnes is substantially correct. The points of resemblance between the symbols and the events of history, especially as portrayed by the infidel Gibbon, are too many, too striking, and too exact to allow the thought that they are merely fortuitous. It would seem as though God has raised up this great historian to perform a work for the Bible and the Church, which could not have been so effectually performed by a friend. At times it seems as though he were writing history purposely for the elucidation of prophecy."[1]

Dr. Craven confirms Elliott's interpretation of "*the third part*," an expression that frequently occurs in these prophetic visions. The Roman Empire, at the epoch referred to in the Trumpets, was regarded as being divided into three distinct divisions, the Western, the Central, and the Eastern portions, and it was upon the Western *third* that the judgments fell. Thus of the first four Trumpets Dr. Craven says: "It is notorious that four successive hordes of enemies, did, in the fourth and fifth centuries, burst upon the Roman Empire, their ravages being almost entirely confined to a *third*, or the Western division, thereof; and it is manifest also that these ravages did, as to their general features most strikingly fulfil the requirements of the symbolism—the *first* invasion being on the inland provinces, the *second* on the maritime portions, the *third* on the rivers and fountains, the *fourth* affecting the governors, the *luminaries* of that third part. In view of the general agreement, which is like that of the mountaln shadows on the bosom of the lake of Geneva and the mountains themselves, it seems legitimate to conclude that the symbol shadowed forth the fact, and that *the third part* of the former was

[1] Lange, *Commentary on the Revelation*, p. 213.

designed to indicate (when the event should occur) the third part of the smitten Empire. If this be so, then, when it is said that hail fell upon the earth, we may understand the prophecy as meaning that it fell upon that third part. . . . And, still further, by the third part of the trees and all the grass, we may understand the trees and grass of that smitten third part."[1]

Dr. Craven carefully examines the arguments brought by Alford against the Historical interpretation of the Trumpets, and shows their weakness and untenability. In fact he says that it was the weakness of the objections against the Historical view, as well as the remarkable correspondence of history with that view, which convinced him that the Historical interpretation was the true one.

In the light of these explanatory remarks we may briefly interpret the first four Trumpets as follows. We read: "The first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."[2] This symbolises the irruption on the Roman Empire of the Northern Gothic barbarians under Alaric, a *hail-storm* according to the usage of the Old Testament prophets being an apt figure for a fierce invasion *from the North*, whence hail-storms are wont to come. Gibbon's account of their bloody massacres and devastations by fire exactly accords with the symbolic description of the storm of hail "and fire mingled with blood." The storm is said to fall upon the third part of the *earth* as contrasted with the *sea* of the following Trumpet. This denotes, according to the explanation already given, that the *inland* provinces of the Empire were to be the localities specially attacked; and the repetition of the "third" part emphasises the fact that it was the Western third of the Roman Empire on which these judgments would specially fall.

[1] Alford prefers to assign a more general and indefinite meaning to the expression "third part" in these prophecies, namely, as signifying "that though the judgment is undoubtedly, as to extent, fearful and sweeping, yet that God in inflicting it spares more than He smites."

[2] Revelation viii. 7 (R.V.).

In the vision of the *second* Trumpet, we read, verse 8: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed." Here the symbolism is changed from the hail-storm to the *volcano*. The prophet in his vision beholds a volcanic mountain in a state of eruption, situated near the sea as frequently is the case with volcanoes. The mountain by a sudden convulsion is precipitated into the waters, which forthwith appear turbid and of the colour of blood, the catastrophe causing destruction of life in the sea as well as working havoc amongst the shipping there. As the former Trumpet whose judgment fell on the third part of the *earth* denoted an irruption into the *inland* provinces of the Western third of the Empire, so here, where the *sea* is spoken of as receiving the judgment, there is foretold an invasion of the *maritime* provinces by some fierce and destructive power, symbolised by the volcano, the invasion being accompanied by bloody engagements in naval warfare.[1] What was thus symbolically foretold exactly accords with what took place in history when Genseric the Vandal invader attacked the islands of the Mediterranean, and the African *maritime* provinces belonging to the Western "third" of the Roman Empire. The Romans of that Western "third" attempted to oppose him by sea, but their navies were defeated, and thus in the words of the prophecy "the third of the ships was destroyed."

Next we read, verse 10: "And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the Star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." Such was the scene of the *third* Trumpet beheld by St. John in vision. Here the agent of judgment is symbolised by a *star*, a well-known Scripture emblem for a conspicuous leader.[2] The

[1] The above symbolic meaning of a mountain or volcano has previously been shown from Scripture. See Introduction, p. 9.

[2] *E.g.*, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob," Num. xxiv. 17. So of the

prophet saw in vision a falling star, or meteor, with its long fiery tail, dash athwart the sky, and precipitate itself upon the "rivers" and "fountains" in the landscape before him, making them so bitter that many died. A large meteor was regarded by the ancients as foreboding some terrible calamity. And as the sphere of the former judgment was the "sea" in connection with the Western "third" of the Empire, so here the locality belongs to that same "third." By the "rivers" we must understand to have been symbolised the great boundary rivers of the Roman Empire, and by the "fountains of waters" that great source of the river systems of Western Europe which may be regarded as being centred in the Alps. This was just the range of the ravages of Attila the Hun, called "the scourge of God." Wherever this scourge fell the region formerly prosperous and peaceful became changed into the *bitterness* of death. And thus in this Western third of the Roman Empire the symbolic words of this prophecy were fulfilled: "The third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

We now come to the *fourth* Trumpet, verse 12: "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner." We have previously shown how in the sixth Seal similar imagery portrayed a *spiritual* overthrow namely that of Paganism, the luminaries of heaven being a well-known Scriptural emblem for *ruling powers*. This vision of the Fourth Trumpet, referring to events about a century later, foretold a *political* overthrow. The "third part," as in previous Trumpets, refers to the Western third of the Roman Empire. The *political* overthrow of that Western Roman Empire and its dignitaries was accomplished by Odoacer chief of the Heruli, and after him by Theodoric King of the Ostrogoths. Odoacer commanded that the name and office of the Roman Emperor of the West should be abolished. Romulus Augustulus abdicated the throne. The

King of Babylon, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star!" Is. xiv. 12 (R.V.). In other passages "stars" are similarly used to denote leaders.

insignia of authority were transferred to Constantinople. Thus was fulfilled the eclipse of the ruling powers of the Western Empire, the darkening of "the third part" of sun, moon, and stars, which St. John beheld in this symbolic vision of the Fourth Trumpet.

Here we would pause to ask our readers if this be not a more sober and intelligent interpretation than the Futurist view, which interprets these visions as if they were literal records of events yet to take place. This view logically carried out requires us to believe that the first Trumpet means that at some future day "a storm of hail, and fire, and bloody intermingling, shall fall upon and envelop the world" the result of which will be "bloody and putrid blackness spread all over the smitten world." It explains the second Trumpet as foretelling that one day a great mountainous burning mass of matter (according to some of the size of Mount Blanc or Ararat), will plunge into the sea and turn a third part of it into actual putrescent blood, and at the same time the third part of the ships are to be "burned, sunk or dashed ashore" by a "tempestuous commotion of the elements attending this awful precipitation." Similarly they interpret the third Trumpet of a literal meteor that will fall upon the third of the rivers, and upon the springs of waters, turning them into the "deadly bitterness of absinth," just as the previous burning mountain, they say, turned the sea into actual blood. The fourth Trumpet they explain as follows:—"Sun, moon, and stars will shine with only the third of their force, disturbing the seasons, hindering the ripening of fruits and harvests, and filling the world with chilliness and sickening gloom." Such is the outcome of the Futurist system of literal interpretation. Between this and the Historical explanation which we have given we must leave our readers to choose.[1]

Some Futurist writers, however, shrinking from the extravagances involved in the logical application of the literal system of interpretation, feel compelled to admit the principle of symbolism in a modified manner in order to explain the visions

[1] The Futurist author from which the above quotations are taken is Dr. Seiss, *On the Revelation.* Lecture xviii.

of the Trumpets; while, like others of that school, they throw forward the fulfilment into the few closing years of this dispensation. Thus, with reference to the visions which we have just considered, a well known Futurist author says: "It needs only that God should stop the course of nature and wither its powers, in order to throw all human life into confusion and bitter woe; and this, under the first four Trumpets, is revealed as about to be." Of the first Trumpet he says, "The vision of fire, hail, etc., is symbolic of the application of God's destructive power against the pleasantness and beauty of the earth." He explains the second as "the alteration of the ordinary course of nature by bringing the elements into collision in a manner as yet unknown; symbolised in the vision by a burning mass like a mountain of fire cast into the sea." Of the third he says: "An evil power from above, symbolised by a star falling to the earth, becomes connected solely with this earth, in order to bring bitterness and death into its waters." The fourth Trumpet he explains as, "The withdrawal of blessings heretofore ministered through the heavens. . . . A time when the heavens in their revolution begin to minister darkness instead of light."[1]

Such a vague and unsatisfactory interpretation as this seems scarcely preferable to the ultra-literalism of the Futurist author previously quoted.

Still more striking, as we shall presently see, is the contrast between Historical and Futurist interpretation as regards the next two Trumpets, the fifth and sixth, which form the subject of Revelation ix. It should be remarked that the last three Trumpets of the series, the fifth, sixth, and seventh, by reason of the special character of the judgments to be poured out during the period which they symbolise, are spoken of as *Woe* Trumpets, and as such they deserve special consideration.

The downward course of corruption of truth still continued as the Papacy rose into power at Rome after the removal of the Cæsars to Constantinople, and the professed Christianity of the Empire became more and more assimilated to the previous errors of Paganism. This called down further marks of God's

[1] *Thoughts on the Apocalypse*, by B. W. Newton, pp. 124, 133.

displeasure, and accordingly the scourge of war was again inflicted upon Christendom. First came the disastrous invasions of the *Saracen* hordes, and afterwards the no less terrible invasions of the *Turks*. These judgments were prophetically symbolised in the visions of the fifth and sixth Trumpets. The whole of Revelation ix. is taken up with the description of these two visions. The symbolism is extremely complicated, and the details very numerous. But the marvellous correspondence of the facts of history with the details thus symbolically described is such as to preclude the idea of mere coincidence, and, as shown by the editor of Lange in the words already quoted, prove the truth of the Historical system of interpretation.

In the vision of the *fifth* Trumpet, Revelation ix. 1–11, St. John, looking down upon the earthly scene spread out before him, beheld a personage whom he figuratively calls "a star fallen;" and he adds that "there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss." A star, as we showed when explaining the *third* Trumpet, is a Scriptural emblem for an exalted personage, and a "fallen" star aptly symbolises one who has become degraded. The figure in the vision seems clearly to indicate Satan himself. It is worthy of notice that as the deadly influence of the Papal system is said, in Revelation xi. 7, and xvii. 8, to have been conceived and originated in the "abyss," or home of Satan, so the other great corrupt and desolating error which has darkened the world, that of Mohammedanism, which was foretold in this prophetic vision, is also described as emanating from "the abyss."[1]

When this fallen star had opened the mouth of the "abyss," St. John saw a darkening smoke ascend, an apt symbol of the dark cloud of error and fierce fanaticism taught by Mahomet and propagated by the Koran. Schlegel's description in his *Philosophy of History*, where he speaks of the rise of Mohammedanism as "the new *power of hell*," remarkably illustrates the symbolism of this passage. The swarms of scorpion-locusts,

[1] For the imagery of a fallen star compare Isaiah xiv. 12, and Luke x. 18. See also what has been said on the fall of Satan, at page 120, and on the Papacy originating in the Abyss, at page 186.

"like unto horses prepared for war," that issued from this smoke, symbolised the hosts of Arab or Saracen cavalry, instigated by the doctrine of the Koran, which at the beginning of the seventh century invaded Christendom. The correspondence of the details of the symbolism is exact. The East, especially Arabia, was regarded as the home of the locust, and it was from thence that the Saracens or Arabs issued in successive swarms. The admixture of the *human* element in the symbolic creatures that St. John saw shows that the agents of this Woe were *men*. The command in verse 4, "that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree," exactly corresponds to the commands actually given to those armies as recorded by historians. The further direction only to hurt "such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads" equally points to the fact that these invasions were openly announced as against *idolaters*; for Paganised and corrupt Christianity was justly regarded in this light by the Saracens. All such apostates from the truth might well be described as being without the mark of God's true children. In verses 5, 6, it was foretold in vivid symbol that though these fierce invaders would bring fearful misery upon corrupt Christendom, yet their power was to be *limited*, they were not utterly to destroy the name of Christianity, they were to *torment* not to *kill*; and accordingly historians tell how marvellously these invaders were checked in their career when they seemed on the point of *extinguishing* altogether that debased form of Christianity which was the object against which their animosity was directed. The duration of this scourge is twice mentioned as "five months." This, like the rest, is symbolic. Five prophetic or symbolic "months," each reckoned as containing thirty days, "a day for a year," amount to 150 years.[1] The prophecy therefore foretold that this would be the *characteristic period* of Saracen invasions, *i.e.* the *time of their greatest intensity*. The testimony of Gibbon and other historians shows how remarkably this feature of the prediction was fulfilled. Dating the commencement of the Saracenic Woe from the year of Mahomet's proclamation of his mission, A.D. 612, the 150 years

[1] A brief explanation of the symbolic chronology of prophecy has been given at page 134.

would terminate in A.D. 762, the year in which Saracenic aggression practically ceased, and the Caliphate was removed to Bagdad. "War," says Gibbon, "was no longer the passion of the Saracens—*there terminated the progress* of the Arabian Empire." Thus the words of verse 12 received their fulfilment:—"The first Woe is past: behold there come yet two Woes hereafter."

Again, the peculiarities of appearance, described in verses 7–10, strikingly identify the symbolism with the Saracen invaders. These scorpion-locusts were "like unto horses prepared for war." The Saracen hosts were principally *horsemen*.[1] "Crowns like unto gold," correspond to their peculiar head-dress, *turbans* adorned with gold or yellow. The remarkable feature mentioned concerning these symbolic creatures seen by St. John, that "their faces were as men's faces, and they had hair as the hair of women," was exactly fulfilled in the fact noticed by historians that the Saracen invaders had fierce *manly* faces with beards, but they wore their hair long *like women*. That "their teeth were as the teeth of lions" indicates the well known ferocity of these invaders. The "breastplates of iron" constitute another identification with the Saracens. Elliott aptly quotes from the Koran "God hath given you *coats of mail* to defend you in your wars." Not that all were thus clad in armour, but it formed a conspicuous characteristic. In ver. 11, as a concluding feature, either Satan, or, as some think, one of his principal angels was seen by St. John in vision as leader of the host. War and error are alike the work of Satan: the one destroys the body, the other the soul. The name Apollyon, as shown in the *margin*, means Destroyer.

With this Historical interpretation of the *fifth* Trumpet we have already in the Introduction briefly contrasted the Futurist method of literal interpretation, which requires us to believe that at the end of the present dispensation evil spirits of the extraordinary shapes described, namely, as locusts like unto horses prepared for war, with crowns like unto gold, and with men's faces, and women's hair, and lion's teeth, will swarm forth out of smoke issuing from the abyss, and spread over the earth to torment

[1] For similar imagery to depict invasions by armed cavalry, see Joel, chaps. i. and ii.

mankind. Again we would ask our readers which method of explaining God's Word is most in accordance with reason and sober judgment. Other Futurist writers, however, staggered by the consequences of literalism thus applied, attempt a compromise which we shall notice under the sixth Trumpet, and show to be equally unsatisfactory.

After the Saracen scourge, or first Woe, had passed away, there came a time in the Divine counsel when the corruptions of Christendom must needs receive further conspicuous chastisement, and this was foretold in the symbolic revelation given to St. John by the vision of the *sixth* Trumpet or second Woe, signifying, as we shall show, the terrible invasions of Christendom by the *Turks*. In this, as in the previous vision, a number of minute details, relating to the most striking characteristics of these invaders, were prophetically represented to the eye of St. John by means of the strange and complicated symbolic figurations described in Revelation ix. 12–21.

The command—"Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates" (ver. 14)—indicates the launching forth of a destructive agency in that neighbourhood which had been previously restrained. We have already mentioned that the aggressive spirit of Mohammedanism, as represented and developed by the *Saracens* of the previous Trumpet, after the removal of the Caliphate to Bagdad as its centre and capital, had declined, and so was *restrained* for some two or three centuries. Bagdad was situated on the river Tigris at its nearest contact with the Euphrates. We shall see that the Euphrates was to be the starting-point of the invading host. Hence it was appropriate that the angels or instruments of Mohammedanism should be spoken of in the present vision as having been previously *bound* in that locality. Moslem fanaticism was now to be loosed once more as a scourge in the hands of the *Turks*. The four angels are angels of judgment, whose mission was to gather Turkish hordes as instruments for inflicting judgment from all parts of the country beyond the Euphrates, *four* being the number that expresses territorial extension. It is a well-known fact, attested by historians, that the Power of the Turkomans, which had gradually

advanced westwards to the Euphrates, was centred in the territory east of that river, and *bounded* by it, when they first came into prominence as a scourge of Christendom. It was by crossing the boundary of the Euphrates that they issued forth on their career of slaughter and conquest as described in the pages of Gibbon. Hence we see clearly the aptness of the symbolic injunction, "Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates."

The object of this Turkish scourge is said, in verse 15, to be that "they should kill the third part of men." The meaning of the phrase "the third part" has already been explained. The mention of the locality of the Euphrates, as well as the facts of history during the period following the Saracen scourge, point to the *Eastern* "third" of the Roman Empire, with Constantinople for its capital, as being the particular *object* of the destructive agency symbolised by the loosing of the angels. When, therefore, we come to ask what is the meaning of the characteristic period assigned for the *duration* of the scourge, symbolically described as "the hour and day and month and year," we must remember that it is *not the whole duration of the Turkish Power* that is being spoken of, but *the duration of its action for a special object*, namely, "to kill the third part of men," or, in other words, for the destruction of the Eastern "third" of the Roman Empire. *The characteristic period, or prophetic measuring-rod, of the career of a Power, means the length of its time of prospering*, or, as in the present instance, of its career up to a certain critical point indicated in the prophecy, *not of its total existence.* This important feature of apocalyptic prophecy must be carefully borne in mind.

Let us see how remarkably history throws light upon these points. In 1062 Alp Arslan, the warlike leader of the rising power of the Turks, prepared to undertake a holy war against Greek Christendom, the Eastern "third" of the Empire of Rome; and in the following year, as Gibbon tells us, he "*passed the Euphrates* at the head of the Turkish cavalry." This was the beginning of the disruption of the Eastern Empire of Rome. This new and aggressive power continued to spread in the East, in spite of the Crusades, and other checks, until some four centuries later; when the object and end of the mission of destruction inaugurated by the loosing of the four angels of the

Euphrates to "kill the third part of men" was finally accomplished by the capture of Constantinople in 1453, thereby completing the dissolution of the Eastern "third part" of the Roman Empire.

If we take the prophetic measuring-rod of the time assigned for the carrying out of this judgment of the sixth Trumpet upon the apostasy of Christendom, mysteriously described as "the hour and day and month and year," and interpret these terms symbolically, on the principle already noted in explanation of the "five months" of the preceding Trumpet, we find that the period thus described is, within a few weeks, 391 years.[1]

It is often difficult to fix the exact time which in the Divine mind is regarded as the actual starting point of a long prophetic period, for it is evident that a certain amount of obscurity is intended. But if we date the loosing of the four angels to gather the invading hosts, *i.e.* the preparation of war, as taking place in the year 1062, as already mentioned, then the interval between that date and the capture of Constantinople in 1453 corresponds to the mystically described period of 391 years. After the fall of Constantinople, which, as we have seen, formed the conclusion of its characteristic period and special work in the Eastern "third" of the Empire, the Turkish scourge was extended to Europe, and there became a source of dread. But in 1571 their power began to decline, and more than a century later, the victory of John Sobieski of Poland, immediately followed by the Peace of Carlo-

[1] As we have already explained, (see p 136), the prophetic symbolical "year" of 360 days=360 *years*. Similarly the "month" of 30 days=30 *years*. The "day"=1 *year*. The "hour"=either 30 or 15 days according as we reckon it to be the 12th or 24th part of the symbolic "day" or year Hence we get a period of 391 years and 15 or 30 days for "the hour and day and month and year."

Mede and Elliott think that the use of the Greek word "*eniautos*" instead of "*kairos*" indicates that a natural year and not a prophetic year is meant, which would make the whole period a few years longer, and would date from the illustrious Togrul Beg, the predecessor of Alp Arslan. But the objection to this seems to be that it mixes up two kinds of reckoning in one prophetic formula. Other commentators regard "the hour and day and month and year" as simply denoting the *definiteness* of the time fixed by God for the execution of His purpose. But the analogy of the "five months" of the previous Trumpet, and the enigmatical character of the expression, together with the correspondence of dates, confirm the explanation given above.

witz in 1699, inflicted such a blow upon the Turkish Power that, although still a grievous evil wherever it could make its blighting influence felt, it could no longer be regarded as a *Woe* which inspired terror in Christendom and threatened it with destruction. This date, therefore, is thought by some, with good reason, to mark the close of the sixth Trumpet period; though others, with Elliott, think that it may be regarded as lasting on for another century, when, with the still further degradation of the Turkish Power, the *Woe* may be said to have more completely passed away.

Some recent writers, in consequence of Turkey's gross misgovernment, more especially as manifested in the late wholesale massacres of Armenian Christians, have been misled into supposing that the period symbolised by the sixth Trumpet, or Turkish Woe, has not yet passed away, leading to the further error of supposing that the period symbolised by the seventh Trumpet has not yet begun. But this is a mistake which brings confusion into the whole interpretation. The fanatical outbreak of Moslem hatred against Christians, in a comparatively small portion of the Turkish dominions, cannot for a moment be justly regarded as indicating that Turkey is still a Power that strikes terror into Christendom. Rather it should be viewed as the flickering of an expiring candle, or the spasmodic quiver that often precedes dissolution, and as showing the inveterate hatred to Christianity that still exists in the exhausted Sick Man of Europe, and will remain to the end.

Let us now notice briefly, in the order in which they are given, the other striking characteristics of the invading hosts which St. John beheld in this symbolic vision; and we shall see how, in the most remarkable manner, they confirm the application of this prophecy to the *Turks*, and, when taken all together, render the identification complete.

Especial attention is drawn in verse 16 to two facts impressed upon St. John in his vision of this scourge, namely, that the invading force was composed of "*horsemen*," and that it was *exceedingly numerous*, or, as it is expressed in Eastern hyperbole "twice ten thousand times ten thousand." Now precisely these

two points are noticed by Gibbon. In words which seem the very counterpart of the prophecy he thus describes the invasion by the Turks: "*Myriads* of *Turkish horse* overspread a frontier of six hundred miles." [1]

No less striking is the correspondence of their *appearance*. St. John says, "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone." Historians tell us that "from their first appearance the Ottomans have affected to wear warlike apparel of scarlet, and blue, and yellow"—the very colours suggested in St. John's description of his vision. He adds that "the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions." This is an obvious symbol of the awe-inspiring fierceness of the advancing swarms of cavalry.

Now we come to what constituted the most remarkable feature, and that is *the means of destruction* employed by the invading horsemen. St. John thus describes what he saw in his vision:—"And out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths" (vers. 17, 18, R.V.). It is impossible not to notice that here, by a twofold repetition, special attention is drawn in the inspired record of the vision to a remarkable means of destruction which would come into operation in the course of this scourge, enabling it to effect its purpose of killing the "third part" of men, as already explained, and therefore selected by Divine prescience as a prophetic symbol and characteristic of the judgment. Is there anything in history to solve the enigma, and to correspond to what St. John saw in vision? We think it can be shown that there is. Barnes has well remarked on these verses: "This is just such a description as would be given of an army to which the use of gunpowder was known. Looking now upon a body of cavalry in the heat of an engagement, it would seem, if the cause were not known, that the horses belched forth smoke and sulphurous flame." The use of *musketry* by the Turks in bringing to a successful issue their invasion of the Eastern third of the Roman Empire, and thus accomplishing the task, assigned to them under this Trumpet, of killing "the third

[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. lvii.

part of men," is one of the established facts of history.[1] The novelty and extraordinary nature of such a feature, constituting, as Gibbon remarks, a complete revolution in the art of war, are precisely such as would lead it to be especially dwelt upon in the prophetic portraiture. *Fire*, *smoke*, and *sulphur* (a chief ingredient in the manufacture of gunpowder) are obviously appropriate for a figurative description of such warfare. Of course St. John knew nothing about this. He simply recorded what he saw. It is for us to interpret.

But there is yet a more striking detail to be noticed concerning the means of destruction by which this Turkish scourge succeeded in accomplishing its purpose. St. John thus further describes what he saw in vision: "For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads, and with them they do hurt" (ver. 19, R.V.). This is a passage that has caused great perplexity to commentators; yet the solution, when once we get the clue, seems obvious and clear. In this part of the symbolism there is indicated a still more terrible means of destruction than the small-arms already described, and that is *artillery*, which, as Gibbon tells us, was the chief means by which the capture of Constantinople was effected.

We have seen that the horses with lion-like heads and mouths symbolised cavalry equipped with firearms; but here St. John sees a further means of destruction, connected with the tails of the horses, as they appeared in the vision:—"their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they do hurt." Let the reader picture artillery going into action, and the appropriateness of the symbol will be seen at once. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how this potent means of destruction could have been, some 1,300 years before its invention, more strikingly and vividly indicated, in conformity with the imagery of the prophetic vision. The cannon dragged behind the horses, and swung round in order to open fire and inflict destruction, seem obviously to correspond to the "tails" behind the horses which

[1] Gibbon mentions that gunpowder was invented and introduced into warfare about the middle of the fourteenth century, and that the Turks were not slow to avail themselves of such a means of conquest.

St. John saw in vision, and of which he says that "with them they do hurt."

Dr. Craven, in Lange's Commentary, has some interesting remarks on this, which should carry conviction. He says: "In Webster's *Dictionary* we find the following as the second definition of *Basilisk*: 'In *military affairs* a large piece of ordnance, so called from its supposed resemblance to the serpent of that name, or from its size. This cannon carried an iron ball of 200 pounds weight, but is not now used.' Such were the cannon with which the Turks moved to the assault of Constantinople. These long, serpent-like instruments of destruction, dragged breach foremost in the rear of the companies that served them, might well have been described in symbol as *tails, like unto serpents having heads*; and the power by which the Turkish armies breached the walls of Constantinople, and thus subjugated the Eastern third of the old Roman empire (chap. ix. 18), was in these *tails* and the *mouths* of these heads." [1]

Dr. Craven adds the further weighty observation, which may be taken to apply not merely to the Trumpet series, but to the whole system of the Historical interpretation of the book of Revelation—namely, that "the resemblance is not merely between the individual symbols and the events which have been adduced as fulfilling them respectively, but it is a resemblance between the entire series regarded as a whole, and the entire course of history—it extends to the relations of the symbols to each other, their succession and mutual proportions." [2]

We shall give later on a remarkable confirmation of the truth of the Historical interpretation of the *Trumpets* furnished by the anticipations of Fleming and other expositors based upon that method of explaining them, anticipations which have received a striking fulfilment.

[1] Elliott gives an engraving from a contemporary authority of one of these long, old-fashioned cannon, ending in an animal's head with open mouth. *Hor. Apoc.*, i. 514.

[2] Lange's Commentary on the Revelation, p. 215. This consideration is sufficient of itself to show the futility of the attempt made by some to reconcile Historicism with Futurism by saying that both are true. No one can rationally expect a repetition of the entire course of history.

And now, once more, we may compare the Futurist view, and we shall see that their system of literal interpretation applied to this sixth Trumpet leads to anticipations equally extravagant and improbable with those already cited, if not more so. Thus Dr. Seiss avers that the infernal spirit-horses, as he calls them, which St. John saw in vision, will one day actually be sent forth to overrun the earth, "just two hundred millions of them, . . . infernal spirit powers which are permitted to put themselves forth in these horrid forms." They are to be literally what St. John beheld, leonine in appearance, with riders, "and yet the riders are parts of themselves; . . . they are covered with coats of mail; . . . they do not eat nor does it appear that they are capable of being wounded or killed. . . . They stifle and kill with what they belch forth from their mouths, and they hurt and injure with their snake-headed tails. . . . Hence, to meet one of these two hundred million of infernal horses face to face is certain death, either by stifling or burning. As to the serpentine tails nothing is said of power to kill, but only of power to injure, to lame, maim, sting, or hurt. The idea of serpentine tails suggests a capacity to bite and sting. . . . Think of having to live amid such perils and such scenes, subject every moment to be horrified, stung, stifled, and destroyed, . . . killed by the visible monsters of hell that throng about your path by day and your dwelling by night!"

Again we ask our readers whether the Historical interpretation which we have given does not more commend itself to their intelligence.[1]

It is true, as we have previously remarked, that the more cautious Futurist writers shrink from the extravagances which result from the logical application of their principle of literalism to these visions, and so do not attempt to explain the details, but content themselves with asserting that they will all be actually and literally fulfilled in the future—somehow. Others attempt a compromise, which, however, signally fails to explain the symbolism or to assign any definite meaning to the details. Thus the author, whom we have previously quoted at the close of the

[1] The above extracts are from Dr. Seiss on the Revelation, p. 261, etc.

fourth Trumpet, explains the scorpion-like locusts of the fifth Trumpet to mean evil spirits, who will go forth over the earth in future, with Satan as their head. Their crowns mean victory. He further says: "Their having the faces of men indicates not sympathy (*that* is never found apart from God; Satan knows it not), but it marks such acquaintance with the feelings and circumstances of humanity as would qualify them the better for their work of torment—as would teach them where and how to inflict the wound. The long, flowing hair, like the hair of women, indicates, I think, that it will be to them no task of sorrow (for the close-shaven head is the token of the mourner), but rather one of revelry and joy. . . . Such appears to me the character of this infliction upon a nation or nations of blaspheming infidels." Similarly he explains the Euphrates horsemen of the sixth Trumpet as "an army of fiends" prepared under the hand of the four angels to be let loose over the earth in future. Of the remarkable and mysterious details which are given of their appearance, he says: "The symbols are too plainly expressive to need explanation" (!). He suggests, however, that the breastplates of jacinth (hyacinth, R.V.) may have reference to "the blue flame of the pit." He does not think these agencies will be visible. With regard to the four angels, he says: "I understand that the angels here spoken of are literally angels; that they are really imprisoned; and that the Euphrates means the Euphrates. . . . Why these are bound at the Euphrates, or how, it is not for us to say." [1]

We trust we have now given our readers sufficient materials to enable them to judge for themselves between the Historical and Futurist interpretation of these Trumpet visions.

Next we must notice the sounding of the *seventh* Trumpet. After the description of the sixth Trumpet, in the latter part of chapter ix., the regular order seems somewhat interrupted by the introduction, in the next few chapters, of several visions intended to convey a fuller revelation of things more especially concerning the Church. By a little care, however, we are able to escape

[1] *Thoughts on the Apocalypse.* B. W. Newton, pp. 122–135.

confusion, and to follow out the sequence and order which we are endeavouring to trace through the three connected series of the *Seals*, the *Trumpets*, and the *Vials*.

In a former portion of this volume (p. 106, etc.) we explained that the visions of chapter x. and of the greater portion of chapter xi. are *episodical* visions introduced for a special purpose between the sixth Trumpet of chapter ix. and the sounding of the seventh Trumpet at the close of chapter xi. We there showed that chapter x. is a vision of the Reformation era. A mighty angel comes down out of heaven who "had in his hand a little book open." St. John, there symbolising in his own person the true Christian ministry, was bidden to "eat it up" and to "prophesy again over many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." This "little book *open*" we showed to symbolise the Bible, which through the dark ages of Rome's false teaching was practically *closed* to the people; and the vision refers to the study of God's Word and the preaching of the Gospel, with especial reference to the Reformation—that glorious work which was God's protest against the corruption of His truth. This Reformation era is included within the limits of the period of the sixth Trumpet, or Turkish Woe.

But here we must notice that the mighty angel, who descended from heaven with the "little book open," also made a remarkable preliminary announcement concerning the sounding of the seventh Trumpet. He uttered a solemn oath "that there shall be time [or *delay*, marg.] no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel [*i.e.*, in the course of the period symbolised by the seventh Trumpet], when he shall sound, then is finished the mystery of God."[1]

[1] Revelation x. 6, 7. The translation of the Authorised Version, "begin to sound," is incorrect. We have given above the rendering "when he *shall* sound," or "when he *is to* sound," instead of that of the Revised Version, "when he is about to sound." The events foreshadowed by the seventh Trumpet were certainly not to take place *before* the sounding. The rendering we have given is required by the sense and context, and is adopted by De Wette, Ewald, and other scholars. This meaning of the Greek expression here employed, namely, to denote a future event appointed by God to take place, something that *is to be*, or *shall be*, is frequent in the New Testament. (See Grimm's New Testament Lexicon, s.v.). That it is to be so rendered here

This announcement, as we shall show, means that the period symbolised by the seventh Trumpet will reach up to the end of the present age of "*mystery*," and to the beginning of the time of *manifestation* which will take place near its close.

It must be remembered that the seventh Trumpet, like the preceding ones, signifies *a lengthened period*, as indicated by the expression, "*the days* of the voice of the seventh angel." The two previous Trumpets, that of the Saracen Woe and that of the Turkish Woe, each lasted for several centuries. The seventh, or last Woe Trumpet, dating from the French Revolution, as we shall explain more fully presently, has as yet covered about one century.

After the above anticipatory announcement by the angel concerning the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, the Reformation vision is continued to the end of the chapter, and is followed in chapter xi. by the further symbolic vision of the Two Witnesses, a vision closely connected with that of chapter x., but containing a fuller revelation, and foreshadowing the long conflict between the true and the false Church of Christ, which led up to the crisis of the Reformation and the victory of truth which then took place. As we have previously given a brief explanation of these chapters, we need not further dwell upon them here.[1]

It is not till the close of chapter xi. that we come to the description of the actual sounding of the seventh Trumpet which, as we have seen, had been briefly and anticipatively announced in the previous chapter. We read: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. And

is shown by chapter viii. 13: "Woe, woe, woe . . . by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who *are yet to sound*," where the same expression occurs.

[1] See page 108.

the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth." [1]

We here notice what is very important for the understanding of the vision, namely, that the preliminary judgments that were to take place during the main course of the period symbolised by this seventh Trumpet are passed over, as they were to be more particularly unfolded in the subsequent series of the Vials. Just as in the prophecy of Joel, quoted by St. Peter, Acts ii. 17, with regard to the present dispensation, the great events of the beginning and the end are more especially dwelt upon; so in the sounding of the seventh Trumpet the crisis of the end, which will be its chief characteristic, forms the great topic of the vision. To this the whole description points. The voices heard in heaven utter an *anticipatory* chorus of praise because the last series of judgments, namely, those of the Vials which were to be poured out under the seventh Trumpet, is now entered upon, the climax of which, and that upon which their anticipations chiefly dwelt, would be the epoch of the coming of the King. This glorious crisis was previously indicated in the announcement of the angel in chapter x. as the time of *manifestation*, when the "*mystery*" should be finished. This time of manifestation was to begin with the vindication of the saints when they should be raised from the dead and caught up at the first resurrection, and was to be followed by the Great Tribulation, and the overthrow of God's enemies on the earth—events which will be so *manifest* as to compel men to say, "Verily there is a God that judgeth the earth." These things will be the *beginning* of God's procedure of open judgment between the good and the wicked; and hence this crisis is spoken of in the thanksgiving of the four and twenty elders, at the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, as "the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and great: and to destroy them that destroy the earth." It will be seen, from what

[1] Revelation xi. 15–18 (R.V.).

has been said, that the vindication and judgment of the saints of the *first* resurrection, at the *beginning* of Christ's reign, is what is here specially referred to. It must not be confounded, as is often done, with the general resurrection and judgment at the *end* of Christ's millennial reign. *That* will constitute the *second* stage. That will be the *great completion* of God's manifested work of judgment.

Thus we see that in the case of the Trumpets, as in the previous vision of the Seals, we are pointed on, at the end of the series, to the close of this dispensation.

After the description of the sounding of the seventh Trumpet in the latter portion of chapter xi., there is introduced between that sounding and the Vial series, which unfold the details of the period symbolised by that Trumpet, a further episodical vision of a remarkable character, namely, that of chapters xii. and xiii., relating to the history of the Church, and developing more fully Satan's tactics against it. The vision, as we have shown in a previous part of this volume, goes back to the infancy of the Church, and foretells how Satan would seek to ruin it; at first, more openly, by Pagan opposition; afterwards, more insidiously, but not less fatally, by the antagonism of the Beast, the great Papal Antichrist. As these chapters have already been explained at length, we need not further notice them here. The scenes portrayed in them were contemplated by St. John in vision upon the landscape of the Roman earth, which he saw spread out below him, as he gazed from his elevated standpoint of observation.[1]

In chapter xiv. there are introduced several brief *anticipatory* visions, after the manner which we have noticed in the Revelation, concerning events to be more fully disclosed in the subsequent visions of the book. They are given by way of comfort, in view of the terrible mischief to be brought about in the world by the agency of the two Beasts, which formed the subject of the previous chapter. And they point on, like others that we have noticed, to the glorious consummation to

[1] See part ii., chap. i., for an explanation of these chapters.

which the long course of events in this dispensation, that were being symbolically presented to the prophetic gaze of St. John, would ultimately lead.

Let us very briefly glance at these visions of chapter xiv. The first, verses 1–5, is that of the 144,000, standing around the Lamb on Mount Sion. As Alford points out, these 144,000 are the same as those previously referred to under the same number of perfection, in the vision of the sealing in chapter vii. In our explanation of that passage we showed that they are the company of the *elect*. In the former vision they are the Church *militant*, the Church during her earthly course. In the present vision they are the Church *triumphant*, the course of this dispensation being finished. St. John beholds this company, standing on Mount Sion, in the earthly landscape, whilst at the same time he hears from above, from the heavenly scene, an anthem sung in honour of the entrance of the elect upon their time of triumph, a song to which the hearts of the *elect* alone upon the earth could fully respond. The description of this company, given in highly figurative terms, is, like that of the Bride in other passages, a description of whole-hearted faithful believers.[1]

The next vision, verses 6, 7, of the angel "flying in mid heaven," that is, in the heaven of the earthly landscape upon which St. John was still gazing, points on like the other visions of this chapter to the epoch of Christ's coming. It foreshadows a wide preaching of the Gospel in connection with the approaching close of this dispensation. The angel that St. John saw is described as having "an eternal gospel to proclaim to them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people." This vision has a remarkable bearing upon the age in which we are now living, and indicates that the end is drawing near. It is connected with our Lord's prophecy: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." As Alford says, it denotes that "the time of the end is close at hand, when this great era of Christian missions is inaugurated." We know that since its first proclamation by the early Church,

[1] The reader will be able the better to understand this vision of the 144,000 by comparing the explanation of the visions in chapter vii. See page 310.

the command of our Lord, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," may almost be said to have been a dead letter. But the present century, especially during the last years, has seen such a marvellous spread of missionary enterprise, and the Bible has been so widely circulated in the chief languages and dialects, more than three hundred in all, that we may now say that the command is at length being obeyed, and our Lord's prediction quoted above, that the Gospel "shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; *and then shall the end come*," is receiving its accomplishment. Hence the Historical student of prophecy discerns in these things the fulfilment of St. John's symbolic vision of the angel flying in mid heaven, with a proclamation of the Gospel to the nations, and an exhortation to turn to the true God, "for the hour of His judgment is come."

The next vision, verse 8, is that of another angel following the preceding one in its flight across the sky of the earthly landscape, and announcing the fall of Babylon. We have already explained what is meant by the fall of Babylon, and have shown that it includes the destruction of the *city*, in all probability, as well as of the *system* of Rome, and that it will take place in immediate connection with the coming of Christ.[2]

The next vision, verses 9–13, is a vision of the condemnation of apostasy, and the reward of faithfulness. It has a special reference to the terrible and disastrous dominion over the souls and bodies of men that would be exercised by the two Beasts of the preceding chapter, xiii. In the strong language of Apocalyptic symbolism, it pictured forth what would be the fatal result of succumbing to the false claims and false doctrines of the great Papal Antichrist. It is, in fact, the same solemn warning, delivered in vivid metaphor, which St. Paul prophetically announced with regard to those who should willingly yield themselves to the same corrupt Power: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had

[1] For a further explanation of the preaching of the Gospel, "in the whole world . . . and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14), see p. 387.

[2] See p. 201.

pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12). In figurative terms borrowed from similar language, combining the literal and the symbolical, with which Isaiah foretells the destruction of Idumæa,[1] this vision portrays the fatal consequence of accepting soul-destroying doctrines, and yielding to blasphemous claims. Hence the point of the following words, verse 12: "Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"; as much as to say, it is the thought of the eternal righteousness of God, who will punish those that deliberately set aside His teaching and the Gospel as it is in Jesus, and who will as certainly reward the faithful,—the very same thought wherewith Paul comforted the Thessalonian converts in view of persecution—that nerves God's saints to endure. These latter words have a special application to the glorious army of martyrs who have suffered persecution and death rather than yield to the errors and demands of Rome, who have chosen Christ rather than Antichrist; and also they may be taken in a wider sense, as including all who have resisted "the *spirit* of antichrist," the spirit of the many antichrists, that assail mankind at the instigation of their great and malicious head,—in other words, all who have chosen to yield to Christ rather than to Satan.

Some Futurists, instead of recognising the cumulative weight of evidence by which, as we have shown, the Papal Antichrist can be identified, and interpreting such a vision as this *in the light of that evidence*, as we have endeavoured to do, fall into the fatal mistake of reading these visions as if they were literal matter-of-fact statements of history written beforehand. And so they fix their gaze upon such a passage as the above, and picture to their imagination some supernatural monster who will require all the millions of inhabitants in the world to worship him, and to be branded with his mark, and that the judgment portrayed in these verses is intended to denote the peculiarly terrible fate of every one who at that time shall yield to the antichristian monster's demands.

Moreover, they say of the Historical interpretation, that it

[1] Isaiah xxxiv. 9, 10. This prophecy against Israel's inveterate enemy probably awaits its complete fulfilment in the future.

requires us to believe that all professed Roman Catholics, down through the ages, all who have been in communion with Rome, must, according to this passage, be consigned to damnation. But this is a grave mistake, and an utter misrepresentation of the Historical view. Thank God we may believe that multitudes who have worn the *outward* mark of that corrupt system, will be found nevertheless at the Great Day to have escaped the full effects of its poison, and, in spite of the dark cloud of error, to have groped their way to Christ, and so will be saved. Their *hearts* are better than their *heads*, and their *lives* than their *creed*. God alone can judge of individual responsibility. He alone can decide how much of error and rejection of truth is due to ignorance, educational bias, or mental dulness, and how much to the *will*, for which each must be held accountable. The judgment, as we learn from the passage already quoted, 2 Thessalonians ii. 10–12, with reference to the same great power of evil, falls upon those who have deliberately embraced error because they "*have not the love of truth*," those who yield to their own will rather than to the teachings of God's Holy Spirit. The practical lesson of this brief vision amounts to this, that, as we value our souls, we must yield to Christ, not to Satan; must follow truth, not error; and, in the language of Revelation xii. 17, must "hold the testimony of Jesus."

The remaining two visions of chapter xiv., namely, the reaping of the harvest of grain, and the gathering of the harvest of grapes, or vintage, refer, the first to the rapture of the saints or gathering of the elect, and the second to "the winepress of the wrath of God," in other words, to that outpouring of judgments upon the obstinately rebellious inhabitants of the earth which will form the close of the Great Tribulation at the end of this dispensation.[1]

The Vials.

After the episodical visions of chapters xii. and xiii., and the anticipatory visions of chapter xiv., of which we have spoken, the thread of the three sevenfold series of visions, which was interrupted at the close of chapter xi., is again taken up, and the

[1] These two visions will be found further explained at page 393.

pouring out of the seven *Vials* is entered upon in chapters xv. and xvi. These Vials constitute the last series of conspicuous judgments upon Christendom, marking God's displeasure at the corruption of His truth. We have noticed how the description of the sounding of the seventh Trumpet dwells upon the great events at the end of the period symbolised by that Trumpet. The visions of the Vials go back, according to the *resumptive* method of the Revelation which we have before explained,[1] to the beginning of that period, and include the successive judgments of what has been called the Revolution era, and also the judgment of the Great Tribulation; the seventh Vial relating to the actual catastrophe of the end, in which the opposing kingdoms of this world will go down before the King of Glory when He comes to establish His Millennial reign upon earth.

Let us now examine more particularly St. John's record of the way in which this last series of visions was presented to him.

At the beginning of chapter xv. we read: "And I saw another sign [*i.e.* besides those previously mentioned, namely, the Woman and the Dragon of chapter xii.; the expression denoting the striking importance of the events portended] in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God" (*i.e.* this is the last of the three septenary series of judgments, the last series which is to take place before the final consummation).

In these few words we have a brief anticipatory summary given of the whole vision of the Vials, the several details of which are afterwards unfolded in chapter xvi. And it should be noted that the "heaven" in which this anticipatory vision was seen means that higher *heavenly scene* which St. John viewed through the "door opened," whereas the previous two signs, like the series of the Vial visions, had reference to the heaven and the land of the *earthly scene*.[2]

But, before the further details are given, St. John, in accordance with what we have seen to be a constant feature in the

[1] See pp. 300, 301.

[2] For the distinction between the earthly and heavenly scenery of the Revelation, see p. 268.

structure of the Revelation, beholds a comforting vision *preparatory* to the actual pouring out of the Vials, namely, that of the triumphant throng "standing by the glassy sea" (ch. xv. 2, R.V.), the same sea as that in chapter iv. 6, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. This vision was contemplated by St. John, as we have remarked above, in the *heavenly* scene. It indicated that the time was hastening on when the trials of the Church militant would be over, and the song of the Church triumphant would begin. The deliverance of the Israelites accomplished by God at the Red sea, to which reference is made, was the historical type of this glorious crisis.

Next, at the close of chapter xv., in order more particularly to introduce the pouring out of the Vials, there is a brief episodical vision of the opening of the Sanctuary in the heavenly scene, similar to that after the sounding of the seventh *Trumpet* at the close of chapter xi. Here, as there, the opening of the Temple in heaven, in which was the Ark of the Covenant, symbolises God's *faithfulness to His Word* in the matter of rewarding His own people and punishing His enemies. The smoke or cloud in the Sanctuary, as at the dedication of the Tabernacle, and of Solomon's temple, and also as seen at the judgment of Korah, indicates a special manifestation of the majesty and unapproachableness of God on a special occasion, namely, in this case, the unfolding of the last series of judgments, after which God will cease to manifest Himself as a God of judgment, and the Millennial era of peace and happiness will be entered upon. The seven angels go forth on their errand from the immediate presence of the Almighty carrying seven golden bowls, just as the Angel of Incense before the series of the *Trumpets* was seen carrying a censer full of coals of fire from the altar; and here, as there, the prophet sees them go forth from the *heavenly scene* and empty their vessels in succession upon the *earthly landscape spread out below*, betokening by that action judgments to be poured out upon the world.

In order to understand the meaning of the *Vials* we must look back to the previous series of the *Trumpets*. That the two series are intended to be viewed in relation to each other is obvious. All commentators draw attention to the similarity of the sphere of the judgments of the first four Vials with that of the first four

Trumpets. In each case the localities mentioned, and also other features, are almost identical. In each series the first four judgments are represented as being successively visited upon the *earth*, the *sea*, the *rivers and their sources*, and the *sun*. This at once suggests that similar principles of interpretation are to be applied. And as, in our explanation of these four spheres of judgment in the vision of the Trumpets, we have shown that the *earth* meant the inland provinces of the Western Roman Empire, or Christendom, the *sea* had reference to the maritime provinces of the same Empire and to naval warfare, the *rivers and fountains* symbolised the great boundary rivers of that Empire, and denoted more especially the localities in their neighbourhood and the mountain valleys whence their *sources* were supplied, while the *sun* referred, according to the familiar meaning of that symbol, to the chief ruling power; so we shall find that these same symbols repeated in the vision of the Vials carry a similar meaning. It should also be noticed that there is an obvious analogy between some of the plagues of Egypt and these judgments poured out upon the spiritual Egypt of the Papal apostasy, and these judgments like those lead up to the manifestation of God's deliverance of His people, and the destruction of His enemies.

Having thus said something of the *sphere* of the judgments to be poured out under the Vials, let us now notice more particularly the point of *time* at which this series *begins*. For this purpose we must go back and recapitulate a little of what has been touched upon before.

We have seen that the sixth Trumpet, or Turkish Woe, which was a special scourge inflicted by God upon the idolatry of Christendom, culminated in the capture of Constantinople in 1453, but it continued to be a power threatening Christendom till the peace of Carlowitz in 1699, following the crushing blow from the victory of John Sobieski. From this point it rapidly declined, till, towards the close of the eighteenth century, as Elliott well remarks, "The Turkman power was no longer a *woe* to Christendom, but Christendom to the Turkman." By this time also the rise and triumph of the Reformation, God's protest against Papal corruption of the truth, which forms the subject of the episodical visions of Revelation x. and xi., and is included in

the sixth Trumpet, had taken place. Thus during the latter half of the eighteenth century at latest, the termination of the lengthened period symbolised by the sounding of the sixth Trumpet was reached, and the beginning of the period symbolised by the seventh Trumpet, or third Woe, soon followed, as we read: "The second woe is past: behold the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded," etc.[1]

Before the eighteenth century had expired the French Revolution broke out, in 1789. This marks the beginning of the period covered by the seventh Trumpet, and also, as we shall see, the beginning of the series of the *Vials* which are included in that period. We have previously explained,[2] that the description of the sounding of the seventh Trumpet dwells specially upon the events at the *end* of the period symbolised, whilst the judgments under that Trumpet, which were to take place *before* the end, are unfolded in the visions of the *Vials*, which take up the thread of history at the *beginning* of the seventh Trumpet period. And here again we may notice that just as Joel's prophecy with regard to this dispensation, quoted in Acts ii. 17–21, dwells on the marked events of the beginning and the end, so we shall see that the whole period covered by the Vial series is chiefly characterised by the judgments of the revolutionary epoch at the beginning and those of the time of tribulation which will mark its close.

The pouring out of the first Vial is thus described by St. John: "And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and which worshipped his image."[3]

It has been shown by Elliott, Birks, and other commentators of the Historical school that the first five Vials relate to the marked succession of judgments poured out upon apostate Europe during what has been called the age of revolutions, beginning at the close of the last century and extending through the earlier portion of the present one.

[1] Revelation xi. 14, 15 (R.V.). On the duration of the period symbolised by the sixth Trumpet, compare what has been said p. 328.

[2] See p. 337.

[3] Revelation xvi. 2 (R.V.).

The description of the first Vial aptly symbolises the outbreak of the French Revolution, the next great European event divinely selected as a subject of prophecy after the Reformation era, which era, as we have seen, was included in the period indicated by the sixth Trumpet. The outbreak of infidelity, iniquity, and anarchy, which took place at the crisis of the French Revolution, has justly been described in the language of history as *the eruption of a terrible moral ulcer*, and this is the very figure employed here in the language of prophecy. The "earth," as we have already explained,[1] corresponds to the "earth" in the First Trumpet, representing the same sphere of judgment, namely, the inland provinces of the old Western Roman Empire, those European countries which were most completely under the spell of Romish influence, and whose inhabitants are thus specially characterised as having "the mark of the Beast, and which worshipped his image,"—the very countries over which the effects of the French Revolution were chiefly felt.

Of the second Vial we thus read, verse 3: "And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, even the things that were in the sea" (R.V.). Here again, comparing the explanation of "the sea" in the second Trumpet, we may gather that *naval warfare* is what was symbolised by this vision, and the destruction of the chief maritime Powers which were under the sway of Papal Rome, causing scenes of bloodshed and enormous loss of life. If we look into history, we find this symbolical prophecy amply verified by the facts of the case. Immediately after the outbreak of the French Revolution there followed, from 1793 to the end of 1815, a time with regard to which it has well been said that the world's history does not present such a period of *naval war and bloodshed.* The fleets of England swept the seas, and worked havoc amongst the maritime colonies, and ships of war and commerce, belonging to France and her allies Spain and Holland. Nearly 600 French vessels of war are computed to have been destroyed during this period. Such was the fulfilment of the vision seen by St. John, as he gazed downwards from his

[1] Page 346.

post of observation towards the earthly landscape, and beheld, when the angel poured out his bowl into the *sea*, how it became blood "as of a dead man," and all life perished.

With regard to the third Vial we read as follows, verses 4–6: "And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of waters; and it became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou which art, and which wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: for they poured out the bloods of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy." Not only was the era above described a period marked by enormous destruction of life by sea, but also it was a time characterised in a special degree by bloody wars on land in Papal Europe, and this is what is foretold under the imagery of the third Vial. Here again we note that the locality of this Vial is the same as that of the third Trumpet, *the rivers and fountains*; and as in the case of the third Trumpet this was shown to mean the neighbourhood of the great boundary rivers of the Empire, and the Alpine valleys whence their sources sprang, so here the same localities are denoted. History shows the fulfilment. In the years following the outbreak of the French Revolution the countries watered by the Rhone and the Danube, and the sub-Alpine provinces of Northern Italy, became scenes of terrible war and bloodshed through the insatiable ambition of Napoleon; and thus again and again these localities may be said to have been dyed with blood. As to the reason given by the angel for the judgment, in language borrowed from Old Testament prophets,—"They poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and *blood hast thou given them to drink*"—Elliott well asks if it be not true that the cruelties perpetrated against the Waldenses and Albigenses, the Huguenots and the Calvinists, the Hussites and the Lutherans, for their love of the Gospel and their protest against the errors of Rome, did call for the *retributive justice* which was thus foreshadowed in the vision.

Here let us pause a moment and point out the contrast and, as we believe, the error of the Futurist system of literal interpretation of these visions. Some, indeed, give up all attempt

to explain *how* we can conceive of any such literal interpretation. Others venture boldly to carry out their theory. Thus Dr. Seiss, for instance, pleading in justification the miracles of Egypt, says of the second Vial: "Here the *whole* sea is affected, and a change is wrought which makes all its waters like to the blood of one dead,—clotted,—putrescent, and utterly destructive of the life that lives in the sea." This state of things, according to their theory, is to come about in the days of their future individual Antichrist during the last few years of this dispensation. So, again, of the third Vial he says: "This plague touches them all [*i.e.* the rivers and the water-springs] and turns them into blood, so that the hosts of Antichrist can find nothing to drink but blood!"[1]

Now if we turn from this exaggerated literalism, which characterises the Futurist system, and look into God's prophetic Word, which is surely the right method to employ, we find the symbolic meaning, which we have given to the language of the Vials, abundantly justified. Thus the wars and destruction and blood. shed which are generally admitted by prophetic students to be destined to mark the close of this dispensation, as a judgment on God's enemies, a crisis which will be also accompanied by the completed restoration of the Jews, are described by Isaiah in the following strong language of metaphor: "I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob." No one would think of interpreting such an expression as being *drunken with their own blood* in a literal sense. It refers to a conspicuous visitation of retributive war and bloodshed. Surely,

[1] Dr. Seiss, *On the Revelation*, pp. 468, 469. We may mention another well-known Futurist writer who similarly anticipates a minute and literal fulfilment of these descriptions. See *Thoughts upon the Apocalypse*, by B. W. Newton, p. 251. It should be noted that the reference to the miracles of Egypt as an argument for the literal fulfilment of these Apocalyptic prophecies is misleading. The account of the miracles of Egypt is a record of facts of history. The descriptions of the Vials are records of visions. This makes all the difference. We have before alluded to the extravagance of the literal interpretation of this Vial. See Introduction, p. 6.

then, it is only in accordance with reason and sound interpretation to understand the similar strong language in these visions of the Vials in the way we have explained, namely, as denoting wars and bloodshed and destruction by sea and land poured out by God as judgments for iniquities and cruelties perpetrated by Papal instigation against His true people: "They poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy."[1]

We now come to the fourth Vial, related as follows, verses 8, 9: "And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God which hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory." Again, looking to the interpretation of the fourth Trumpet as a key, we find that as the symbol of the "sun" was there used in its familiar meaning of a *chief ruling power*, so here we must take it in a similar sense. There is, indeed, this difference. There it was a sun *darkened*, a fit symbol of the decaying imperialism of the Western Roman Empire about to be extinguished, which we showed to be what was denoted. Here, on the contrary, it is a sun bursting out into extreme brilliancy and exercising a baneful and destructive influence by reason of its excessive heat. Now if we look at Western Europe during the revolutionary era which we are considering, and ask what brilliant but scorching and disastrous power was then in the ascendant, aiming at imperial rule, and working fearful havoc amongst the nations in prosecution of this plan, there can be but one answer, namely, the imperial despotism of Napoleon. No more apt symbol than the scorching heat of the sun could be imagined for the withering influence on the happiness of nations occasioned by Napoleon's conscriptions, and taxations, and destructive wars. "He drained the

[1] The passage referred to in Isaiah is chapter xlix. 25, 26, R.V. As judgment and destruction of life are thus figuratively described, so blessing and abundance of life are similarly spoken of by the prophets in the strong language of metaphor. Compare, for instance, the description in Joel iii. 18: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk."

very life-blood of the people," says the historian, employing another similarly strong metaphor. And, as it always holds true that if God's judgments do not soften they harden, so of this fearful period it is true that those most affected by the judgment, demoralised as they were by infidelity and the reaction from Romish superstition, only sunk deeper into irreligion and rebellion against God's will—"they blasphemed and repented not."

As to the Futurist interpretation of this fourth Vial, of course it follows on the lines of literalism which mark that system, and makes the vision to mean that towards the close of this dispensation there will be an outburst of the heat of the sun that will, as Dr. Seiss says, "scorch and torture" the inhabitants of the earth so that they will be "oppressed, burned, killed by its fiery rays, smitten with sunstroke, overwhelmed with siroccos, suffocated with solar heat." Speaking of the Historical figurative interpretation, he pronounces it impossible, adding that to think of any other fulfilment than the literal "scorching and consuming heat from the sun is simply to browbeat the words of inspiration."[1] We have endeavoured to show that the Historical exposition, so far from "browbeating inspiration," honours it by appealing to God's inspired Word as its own interpreter, and explaining the symbolical prophecies of the Revelation by those of the Old Testament. Thus, for example, we find Ezekiel uttering a prophecy which remarkably illustrates St. John's description of the vision of the fourth Vial. The prophet is commissioned to foretell the withering desolation and destruction of life about to be caused by Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of the Southern Kingdom of Judah in the following symbolical language:—"Say to the forest of the south [*i.e.* the kingdom of Judah], Hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and *all faces from the south to the north shall be burnt thereby.*"[2] Ezekiel further seems to suggest that

[1] Seiss, *On the Revelation*, p. 470.

[2] Ezekiel xx. 47–49. See *Speaker's Commentary*; Ellicott; Fausset; etc.

the people would make the symbolic form of the prophecy an excuse for rejecting his message: "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! they say of me, Is he not a speaker of parables?" Whereupon God commissions him, in the following chapter, to deliver the same prophecy in plainer language, showing that it referred to the Babylonian invasion. What better key could we wish for the meaning of the fourth Vial? In each case the withering destructive action of a powerful and unscrupulous ruler is symbolised by scorching heat.

The fifth Vial which followed is thus described, verses 10, 11: "And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and the kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores [we have seen that the French Revolution under the first Vial was the beginning of the breaking out of these sores, but the evils were to continue under subsequent judgments]; and they repented not of their works." If the Beast is the Papacy, as we have shown it to be, then clearly by this Vial poured out on his *throne* we have symbolised an eclipse of Papal *dominion*, a degradation of the Pope and his clergy in a sphere where Papal influence had been supreme. And is not this exactly what history tells us took place at this period? The French Revolution was followed by the national renunciation of the Romish religion. Twenty-four thousand of the clergy are stated to have been cruelly put to death, and churches were demolished on all sides. The Pope himself, who had sat upon the throne of the Vatican, was made a prisoner, and Napoleon declared the Temporal Power of the Papacy abolished—an event which constituted the first signal and death-knell, so to speak, of its actual downfall which was finally accomplished in 1870. The rage and mortification of the Papal party at these indignities were vividly portrayed in the vision: "And they gnawed their tongues for pain." Here, as in the previous Vial, not repentance but hardening of heart was the result of the judgment: "They repented not of their works."

We may note that here, again, there is a correspondence, though not at first sight so apparent as in the other cases, be-

tween the fifth Trumpet and the fifth Vial, namely, that in each case the especial object of the judgment is the sphere of the Papal apostasy, referred to in the Trumpet by the words, "such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads," and in the Vial as "the throne of the Beast."

The *darkening* of a kingdom is such a familiar Scriptural symbol for religious or political desolation that there is no need to enumerate passages to prove the point. We may mention Micah iii. 6 as an instance where the symbol is used of religious darkness, and Isaiah ix. 19 as a passage where it means the desolation of the kingdom of Israel under Assyrian invasions. The same metaphor, as might be expected, is also used in prophecies which refer to the moral and political desolation and misery which will mark the crisis of the end of this age. Indeed, it is a figure of speech that is equally common in the language of secular history, an example of which, from the pages of Gibbon, we have previously given in our explanation of the third Seal.[1]

The Futurist author, whom we have previously quoted, tells us that the description of this Vial also is to be taken literally, and that towards the end, some time before the actual destruction of the hosts gathered at Armageddon, "the world-wide empire" of an individual Antichrist will be "filled with darkness," during which the inhabitants will "bite their tongues, chew them, gnaw them, as their best diversion from their misery."[2]

Now we come to the consideration of the sixth Vial, which must be treated somewhat more at length. It is a subject of the deepest interest to us, because, according to the Historical view, the period symbolised by this Vial includes the time in which we are now living, and leads up to the very brink of the final crisis which will wind up this dispensation. Moreover, it is this sixth Vial which is the one specially selected by Futurists out of this series as a crucial instance by which they seek to disprove the truth of the Historical system.

We read, verse 12: "And the sixth poured out his bowl upon

[1] See p. 288.

[2] Seiss, *Prophecies of the Revelation*, p. 472.

the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising" (R.V.).

Here again we notice the connection between the series of the Trumpets and that of the Vials in the mention of the river *Euphrates* both in the sixth Trumpet and in the sixth Vial. In our explanation of the sixth Trumpet we showed that the Euphrates was employed symbolically to indicate the Turkish power.[1] We pointed out that the loosing of the four angels "bound at the river Euphrates," there signified the stirring up and launching forth of the Turkish hordes in hostile invasions of Christendom. And since the flooding of a river is a familiar figure in Scripture for invasion, so the ebbing of the flood denotes cessation of invasion; and the drying up of the Euphrates, as mentioned in this prophecy, symbolises the exhaustion and decay of the Turkish Power. This is just what has happened in history. Ever since 1820 the drying up has been steadily going on. From one province after another in Europe and Africa the Turkish flood has receded. Greece, the provinces of the Danube, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt have one by one emerged from beneath Turkish subjection. And now the proverbial "Sick Man" lies prostrate and feeble waiting for the end.

Futurists, in accordance with their system of literal interpretation, assert that an actual drying up of the river is what is here foretold. Thus the author of the volume entitled *The Great Prophecies*, commenting on what he speaks of as "the error of the Historical school which regards the Euphrates as representing the Turkish Empire," says, "there appears to be no foundation whatever for this idea."[2] We hope to make it plain that there is very good foundation indeed. It can be shown that in the figurative language of Scripture the name of a great river is sometimes employed to represent the kingdom through which it flows. Thus in Jeremiah ii. 18, the prophet, rebuking the house of Jacob for forsaking their God who had manifested His power in the preservation of His people, and for committing their repeated error of seeking the alliance of Egypt or Assyria

[1] See p. 327.

[2] *The Great Prophecies*, p. 10.

instead of leaning only upon God, says: "And now what hast thou to do in the way to Egypt, to drink the waters of Shihor [marg., the Nile]? or what hast thou to do in the way to Assyria, to drink the waters of the River [marg., the Euphrates]?" Another passage (Isa. viii. 7) remarkably illustrates the language of the sixth Vial which we are considering: "The Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River [*i.e.* the Euphrates], strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks."[1]

Just, therefore, as in ancient times the Euphrates had been used as a prophetic metaphor to indicate the Assyrian Empire through which it flowed, so, in the present prophecy, it was a suitable emblem to symbolise that future Turkish Power, which, as we have shown in our explanation of the sixth Trumpet, was located in the neighbourhood of that river when it first rose into prominence as a scourge of Christendom, and which now, though in an exhausted state, still holds imperial sway there.[2]

There is no more reason for supposing that the literal Euphrates is going to be actually dried up, than for imagining that when the Assyrian invasion took place, which Isaiah foretold under the symbol of the Euphrates in flood, the invasion was accompanied by an actual flooding of the river.

But, as a further corroboration, not only of this symbolical meaning of the drying up of the Euphrates, but also of the general truth of the Historical method of interpreting the Revelation, it may be interesting here to mention a remarkable instance in which a forecast of the future, based upon that system as applied to the interpretation of the present passage in the sixth Vial, has received a most striking fulfilment.

Some 200 years ago, Fleming, Durham, and other prophetical

[1] See Cheyne on Jeremiah in *Pulpit Commentary*, also Fausset, Ellicott, etc. The note on Jeremiah ii. 18 in the latter Commentary is as follows:—"Great rivers were in the poetry of the prophets the natural symbols of the kingdoms through which they flowed. Shihor, here and in Isaiah xxiii. 3, the Nile, represented Egypt. The 'river' or 'flood,' needing no other name as pre-eminent in greatness, the Euphrates, stood for Assyria (*cf.* Isa. viii. 7). The words point to the tendency to court the alliance now of one now of the other of the great kingdoms of the world."

[2] See p. 327, etc.

expositors of the Historical school, pointed out that since the "Beast" in the Revelation is the symbol of the *Papacy*, the pouring out of the fifth Vial (which they rightly held to be then in the future) upon the throne of the Beast must imply that some violent blow to the *Papacy* was to be looked for as its fulfilment; and, further, that since the Euphrates in the sixth Trumpet meant the *Turks*, the drying up of the Euphrates in the sixth Vial must mean that a decay of the *Turkish Power* would *follow* upon the blow on the *Papacy*.

At the time when these anticipations were modestly and cautiously suggested by these Historical students, simply on the ground of the correctness of the general method of Historical interpretation, no mere human foresight or political sagacity could possibly have predicted these events. Papal Rome was then unshaken, and proudly looked for a continuance of despotic dominion, while the Turkish Power was one of the strongest in Europe. Yet these prophetical anticipations became verified in the most remarkable manner; and what more particularly demonstrates the truth of the interpretation, and the impossibility of its being a mere coincidence, is that the two events came about exactly in the *order* anticipated. First came the blow on the Papacy, which we have explained, under the fifth Vial, and which took place about *a hundred years after* this striking prophetical forecast had been published; and then followed the decay of the Turkish Power, as symbolised under the sixth Vial in the words which we have been considering.

It may be said, however, that some other parts of Fleming's exposition have had to be discarded, or at least revised, by Historical interpreters since his time. But this is only what might be expected. Since Fleming's day further light has been thrown upon some of the details, for the study of prophecy, like other sciences, is progressive. This fact, therefore, in no way invalidates the general truth of the Historical system. Some parts of prophecy are capable of clear recognition, while others are more or less indistinct. A mariner sailing up the Channel in a fog or darkness, may mistake, or fail to discern, some of the less conspicuous headlands or lights, but the distinct recognition of others, more conspicuous and more easily discerned, is a proof

that he is on the right course for all that; and when a number of these conspicuous points have been passed and recognised, there is no further room for doubt or uncertainty. This is just the position of Historical interpreters of the present day. And it must, we think, be admitted by a candid mind that the remarkable verification of Fleming's forecast, which could not possibly have been a mere coincidence, is a strong testimony, in addition to the proofs we have accumulated throughout our inquiry, to show that the Historical method, which was the lamp by the aid of which these great events were discerned and foretold *a hundred years before they happened*, is the true method of interpreting the symbolic visions in the Revelation.[1]

The purpose and result of the drying up of the Euphrates, or decay of the Turkish Power, in verse 12, which we have quoted, is said to be that the way might be made ready for "the kings that come from the sunrising." This expression has occasioned much difficulty to commentators, and various solutions have been offered. It can only be explained, like other portions of the Revelation, by comparing the language of the Old Testament prophets. The true interpretation of this prediction, we believe, is that which understands it as referring to the *Hebrew nation*, and to that restoration to their own land which is the subject of so many prophecies. The term "kings," as thus metaphorically applied to Israelites, seems to refer to their ideal position of pre-eminence with regard to other nations. This ideal was only

[1] It may interest our readers to have the very words of Fleming. Speaking of the Fifth Vial, he said that it would be "poured out on the seat of the Beast, or the dominions that more immediately belong to, and depend upon, the Roman See." He adds this caution: "But we are not to imagine that this Vial will totally destroy the Papacy, though it will exceedingly weaken it; for we find this still in being, and alive, when the next Vial is poured out."

Then of the sixth Vial he said that it would be "poured out upon the Mahometan Antichrist, as the former on the Papacy. And seeing the sixth Trumpet brought the Turks from beyond the Euphrates, from crossing which river they date their rise, this sixth Vial dries up their waves and exhausts their power." (*Rise and Fall of Rome Papal*, by Fleming, p. 81.) We have already shown how the predicted blow fell on the Papacy, and how the Turkish Power, strong at the time the forecast was published, has now been reduced to the state of exhaustion which was anticipated by these students of prophecy.

partially realised in ancient times, but it will be fully realised in the Millennial age. Thus we read in Isaiah, with reference to their future re-establishment at the beginning of that age in more than their former glory: "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers . . . *they shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth.*" [1]

But it may be asked, Why are they described as "from the sunrising," since the Hebrew nation is scattered all over the world? The explanation is furnished by that passage in the prophets from which the description seems obviously borrowed, and where we find the same reference to the drying up of the Euphrates. We find in Isaiah a remarkable prediction of the restoration of the whole nation of Israel from wherever they have been scattered, which is to take place at the time when Christ shall come to set up His Kingdom. After enumerating various quarters of the world from whence they are to be gathered by God's providential agency, the prophet makes *special mention of the East* in the following terms: "And with his scorching wind shall he shake his hand over the River [*i.e.* Euphrates], and shall smite it into seven streams [indicating a river that once filled its bed, but which has become shrunk to a few shallow rivulets], and cause men to march over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall remain, *from Assyria.*" [2] It is obvious that neither the river Euphrates, nor the Gulf of Suez, the "tongue of the Egyptian Sea" which is also referred to in this passage of Isaiah as destined to be "utterly destroyed," presents any obstacle to the repossession of the Holy Land by the nation of Israel, but the Turkish Power certainly does do so. Not till that blighting Power is removed can Israel be reinstated. The "river" therefore and the "tongue of the Egyptian Sea" are prophetically and symbolically used in this passage of Isaiah, after the analogy which we have shown in other Scriptures, to designate the *Power* which would at the time of the fulfilment of the prophecy hold rule in the adjoining countries; and the drying up of the waters means, as we have said, *the exhaustion of that Power.* Just in

[1] Isaiah xlix. 23.
[2] Isaiah xi. 15, 16, R.V.

the same manner, in this passage of the Revelation, under the figure of the drying up of the Euphrates, "that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising," reference is made to that same Power which, when the restoration was to take place, would hold its weakened rule over those regions, namely, to Turkey, as being a chief obstacle to the possession of the Holy Land by the people to whom it belongs; and the exhaustion of that Power is referred to as tending to remove that impediment.

Let us now see whether there are any signs of this part of the prophecy beginning to be fulfilled, and so confirming the Historical interpretation, and indicating to us our exact position on the chart of Prophecy.

We have already mentioned how the drying up of the Euphrates, or exhaustion of the Turkish Power, has been steadily going on since 1820; and now, during the last ten years, the relaxation of its obstructive regulations has begun to prepare the way for the return of the "kings that come from the sunrising." Our Lord prophesied—"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled"—implying that when that time should arrive the treading down would cease, and the Hebrew nation, as foretold by the ancient prophets, would be reinstated in the land of their forefathers. History has shown how, first by the Romans, and, since then, by the Turks, Jerusalem and the Holy Land have been trodden under foot, as the Lord foretold. But now that the times of the Gentiles, or, in other words, the period of Gentile supremacy, which is to last till the close of this dispensation, seems as if it were being fulfilled and drawing to an end, and the time of Israel's foretold restoration and subsequent supremacy seems to be steadily approaching, we see evident signs of the termination of the treading down. Already the blighting foot of the Turkish Power seems to be beginning to be lifted from off the Holy Land. The *partial* and *preliminary* gathering of the Jews *in a state of unconversion*, which, as we learn from a comparison of Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix., with the close of Zechariah, as well as from other prophecies, was foreshadowed as destined to take place

some time before the crisis of the descent of Christ to set up His Kingdom, *has already commenced*. Already they have begun to "dwell securely" in the "unwalled villages" of Palestine. They have returned to their own land by thousands. There are about twice as many, or even more, there now, as were restored after the Babylonish captivity. In the papers of the day it has been remarked that, judging by the number of its inhabitants, Jerusalem has once more become the city of the Jews. It is being extended and improved, and its suburbs are being covered with houses, so that the city outside the walls is as large as that within. Jewish agricultural settlements are being planted all over the land. Moreover, for some time past, in various centres in the world, societies have been formed and moneys collected to further the scheme of restoration. Surely all this looks as if the way were being made ready "for the kings that come from the sunrising."

But we must remember that this is only the beginning of the making ready of the way that is spoken of. The Power of Turkey, that has long been declining, has to be finally overthrown, and the restoration of Israel has to be completed. A way has yet to be made ready for the return of that portion of the nation consisting chiefly of the ten tribes which were originally carried away into Assyria, and from thence migrated into Afghanistan and other parts of Asia. The gathering of these by Divine power is to mark the crisis of Christ's coming to reign. His advent will open the eyes of the blinded nation, and will be at once the signal for their conversion and their completed return. It will be the time of which Zechariah prophesied in the words, "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." [1]

It may be interesting here to add a remarkable illustration confirming the explanation we have given of the way being prepared for the "kings that come from the sunrising." It occurs in a Jewish paper, the *Israelit*, in an article directed against Christian missionary effort. Complaining of the establishment of a Bible Society mission at Peshawur, on the frontier of India, this writer says: "That town is the *entrepôt* of the famous caravan route, leading from India through Afghanistan and Persia to Western

[1] Zechariah xii. 10.

Asia, along which our brethren were driven by Tiglath Pileser into Afghanistan, and the Macedonians were marched by Alexander into India. And, as the Afghan Jews assure their children on each Easter Eve, *on that route the Redeemer of Israel will lead back the Hebrew exiles from Southern and Eastern Asia who will help to erect His throne on Mount Zion.*"[1]

Here let us pause to notice how remarkably the anticipations of prophetical students with regard to the partial preliminary return of the Jews, of which we have spoken, have been fulfilled. Fifty years ago, Chamberlain, Bickersteth, and other writers, arguing from the Scriptures we have already referred to, Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., and the close of Zechariah, together with other prophecies, proclaimed that it was to be expected that there would be a large return of the Jews to Palestine before the coming of Christ; and that this return of the Jews would be *in a state of unconversion*, and that thus in their continued rebellion against their Messiah they would yet have to drink the dregs of the cup of judgment in their own land. These writers looked into God's prophetic Word, and saw that this must be so; but, looking round them in the world, they could see no signs of its becoming so, and they professed their inability to suggest any means by which that which they saw to be foreshadowed in God's Word could be brought about.[2]

We have lived to see the solution of the problem, and the confirmation of their interpretation of prophecy. We have witnessed the outburst of the spirit of hatred towards the Jews in Europe, and have seen that ill-fated race driven forth from their homes so that multitudes, as we have said, have returned to the land that they still call their own. Every year the Jewish Question is

[1] Quoted in the *Jewish Intelligence* for June, 1891.

[2] Thus Elliott, writing in 1861, after recounting the various signs of the times that point to the fact that we are drawing near to the closing events of this dispensation, says: "At the same time some signs are still wanting, especially the non-gathering as yet of the Jews to Palestine." *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iv., p. 242.

It should be noted that the *partial preliminary* return is a matter of *inference* from prophetic allusions, rather than of direct statement, and is largely based upon the description of Gog's invasion in Ezekiel xxxviii., where the invader finds the Jews dwelling peacefully in their land. The correctness of the inference has been abundantly verified, as shown above.

assuming larger proportions in the eyes of the Jewish nation, and of prophetical students. It is probable that the time will come when it will also occupy the attention of politicians, for the Jewish Question, there is good reason to believe, will be mixed up with the Eastern Question that still hovers on the political horizon, and the settlement of the one will involve the settlement of the other.

Since the above was written, the following has appeared in a current periodical, under the heading of "*The Times* on the colonization of Palestine":—"The Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, in a letter to *The Times*, gives some facts which show that the Jews are pouring into Palestine. About one hundred thousand Jews have entered the Holy Land during the last few years, and, 'the arrival of a vaster host is imminent.' 'No one,' he goes on, 'can possibly forecast the next seven years of Jewish immigration.' If the Bishop's view of what is going on is correct, we are face to face with a fact that may revolutionize the politics of Mediterranean Asia. Already the railways are opening up the country between the coast and Jerusalem and Damascus, and if a Jewish immigration on a large scale is added to this, Syria may become once more one of the most important places in the East."

In connection with this political anticipation of the restoration of Palestine and Syria, it is interesting to read the remarkable prediction at the close of Isaiah xix. The whole chapter is a prophecy concerning the destinies of Egypt, and the closing verses point on for their fulfilment to the time when Christ will return to this earth to deliver the Jews, and to set up His Millennial Kingdom. His coming will be, as we have said, the signal for the conversion of the whole nation of Israel; and not only so, but it will also lead to that of Assyria and Egypt. Thus we read in that prophecy: "In that day shall there be an high way [*i.e.* an uninterrupted passage through Palestine. See *Cheyne's* comment here] out of Egypt to Assyria [including Syria], and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria. [The prophecy presupposes their conversion. *Cheyne.*] In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth [*i.e.* the Holy Land is to be the chief centre of the Millennial earth]: for that the Lord of Hosts hath

blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." The whole question of the restoration of the Hebrew nation to Palestine will be found more fully treated later on in connection with the Millennial Kingdom.[1]

Now let us deal with another prominent Futurist objection; for, as we have previously remarked, the sixth Vial, like the sixth Seal, is especially selected by opponents as a crucial instance by which they claim to disprove the truth of the Historical system.

Once more, as presenting the objection in its strongest form, we will give the words of the author from whom we quoted when dealing with the sixth Seal. He says: "We are now, they tell us, in the era of the Vials. At this very hour the wrath of God is being poured out upon the earth. . . . Is this all the wrath of God amounts to? The Vials are the seven last plagues, 'for in them is filled up the wrath of God' [we have already explained these words, and have shown that they mean that the series of the Vials is the last of the three seven-fold series whose whole course spans this dispensation],[2] and we are told that the sixth is even at this moment being fulfilled in the disruption of the Turkish Empire! Can any one be so lost in the dreamland of his own lucubrations as to imagine that the collapse of the Turkish Power is a Divine judgment on an unrepentant world!"[3]

Making all allowance for the pressure of other work under which this author writes, and which has probably prevented him from having time to investigate thoroughly these difficult questions, we must nevertheless submit that to write in this strain shows alike a misunderstanding of the Historical view, and of the passage of Scripture describing the sixth Vial. Nor is it quite consistent with modesty and courtesy thus to speak of a view which has long commanded the assent of some of the highest intellects that have ever applied themselves to the study of prophecy.

The mistake of this criticism is a twofold one. The collapse

[1] See Part II., chap. ix. [2] See p. 338.
[3] *The Coming Prince*, p. 142.

of the Turkish Power is, of course, not a judgment upon an unrepentant world, but upon that Power itself, and upon the Mohammedan apostasy. God has often in history made use of an unworthy instrument for carrying out His purposes, and then, when the work is done, the instrument itself which inflicted cruelties simply for its own selfish ends, deservedly becomes the object of wrath and punishment. Doubtless the judgment upon Mohammedanism has yet to be poured out in its fulness.[1]

But there is a further mistake in the above objection, and this is that it fails to recognise the fact that the era of the sixth Vial, under which we are now living, does not simply include the judgment upon the Turkish Power, which is a lengthy preliminary, but it also includes that tremendous outpouring of judgment upon the world which will result from the disastrous agency of the "three unclean spirits" whose going forth under this Vial is next described.

It is true that this point, namely, the inclusion of the preliminary portion of the Great Tribulation within the era of the sixth Vial, which we shall endeavour to show to be the correct interpretation of it, seems very much to have escaped notice in Historical exposition; and this may be taken as some excuse for the strong language of the writer whose objection we have quoted. It is due, however, to Elliott to mention that he throws out a hint in this direction by remarking that *war*, occasioned by the agency of the three evil spirits, might be expected to form part of the wrath of God poured out *during the sixth Vial*.[2]

The critic above mentioned sums up his charges against the Historical system by adding the strange assertion that it is "in direct antagonism with the great foundation truth of Christianity." He argues that now "*grace* reigns," and therefore he implies that the Historical interpretation which explains these prophecies as referring to God's *judgments* being poured out during this dispensation, must be wrong. But surely this argument is contrary to

[1] Mr. Gladstone, in a reply to an Armenian deputation, recently said: "I have lived to see the Empire of Turkey in Europe reduced to less than half of what it was when I was born, and why? Simply because of its misdeeds—a great record written against it by the hand of Almighty God."

[2] *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iii., p. 533.

common sense and observation. It is true, indeed, that now is a day of grace and forbearance, and that at the close of this dispensation there will be a special manifestation of God's wrath in the punishment of a guilty world, but that does not in the least interfere with the fact that this dispensation has all along been marked by a series of God's judgments. The destruction of Jerusalem, the invasions of Attila, "the scourge of God," the earthquakes, famines, and pestilences, which our Lord foretold, all partake of this character. As surely as the invasions of Assyria and Babylon were a pouring out of God's judgments upon apostate Israel and Judah, so surely we may regard the fierce and devastating incursions of Saracens and Turks, and the disasters of the revolution era, as judgments upon the idolatrous apostasy of Christendom. To insinuate that, because "grace reigns" through this dispensation, it cannot be regarded as having been marked by a series of manifest judgments, is alike contrary to reason and fact. Grace cannot be said now to reign, in the sense of excluding judgments, any more than in the sense of excluding sin.

Let us next examine that further portion of the period symbolised by the sixth Vial, which relates, as we have said, to the pouring out of judgments during the Great Tribulation.

St. John, still gazing down on the earthly scene from the standpoint whence he beheld his prophetic visions, has his attention directed to the three conspicuous symbolic figures which he had seen before, and which are fully described in Revelation xii., xiii. and xvii., namely, the *Dragon*, the *Beast*, and the *False Prophet* (or second Beast of Revelation xiii.); and from their mouths he sees go forth on an errand of mischief amongst mankind three mysterious creatures. He thus describes his vision: "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: for they are the spirits of devils [marg., demons], working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."[1] We shall see that this vision was a symbolic prophecy of a remarkable outbreak of evil

[1] Revelation xvi. 13, 14.

agencies which, though they have been for many centuries at work, are destined to characterise in a special manner the closing years of this dispensation, and to co-operate in bringing about the final period of disorder, revolution, and war.

The frog, swelling whilst it croaks, has, both in ancient and modern times, been a familiar symbol of *arrogant claims put forward with noisy pertinacity.* Whilst its favourite haunt by slime and stagnant waters at once suggests the further characteristic of *corruption.* Hence we see that in both these respects the symbol aptly corresponds to the vivid description given by St. Peter of teachers of error and propounders of false theories. He speaks of these teachers as those who deceive mankind by "uttering great swelling words of vanity . . . promising liberty while they themselves are bondservants of corruption."

We read in the Old Testament how Micaiah in vision saw an evil spirit which said: "I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets"; and the result of the utterance and influence of those prophets was to gather Ahab and his army to the fatal battle at Ramoth-gilead. So St. John beholds these evil spirits go forth from the mouths of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, "unto the kings of the whole world to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God the Almighty." That is to say, during the latter portion of the era of the sixth Vial, these evil influences would begin to put forth a special manifestation of activity. They would act as lying spirits in the mouths of agitators and teachers of false systems amongst men, inspiring them, according to the symbolism of the frogs already explained, to promulgate *corrupt and mischievous doctrines* in the world, with *arrogant and confident pretensions*, in such a way as to bring on a period of distress and judgment in the world, and to lead up in their ultimate results to that great final gathering of the nations to war in which this dispensation is to close.

What, then, are the three evil influences symbolised to St. John in vision by the "three unclean spirits as it were frogs," which he saw proceeding out of the mouth of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, and which are to bring about the period of tribulation and judgment in which this dispensation is to close?

We know that the *Dragon* means *Satan*; and we have shown in these pages (see Part II., chap. ii.) that the *Beast*, in accordance with the meaning of that symbol in Daniel, signifies the *Roman world-empire in its last form*, *the Papal* form, as represented by the person of the *Pope* at the head of it; whilst the *False Prophet*, or second Beast of Revelation xiii., symbolises the corporate body of the *Romish priesthood*, the typical example of false and anti-Christian teaching, whose subserviency to the interests of the first Beast is mentioned as one of its chief characteristics.

In accordance with this meaning of the *sources* from which the three unclean spirits or evil agencies go forth over the world, we cannot be far wrong in regarding the agencies themselves as—(1) the spirit *of infidelity*, that special weapon of Satan, with all that follows in its train, agnosticism, socialism, spiritualism, anarchy, etc.; (2) the spirit of *Papal imperial and political ambition*, which, in spite of the fall of the Temporal Power, will be active up to the very end, and allied, perhaps, with the revolutionary powers of socialism, will yet embroil the world; (3) the spirit of the *superstitious teaching and influence of the Romish clergy*—more especially of the Jesuit Order, "the power behind the Pope"—in support of priestcraft and Papal aims. These three agencies are quite sufficient to bring about that period of confusion, tribulation and judgment, that has yet to burst forth during the era of the sixth Vial, of which they are here said to be the chief instigators, and in which they will play the most conspicuous part.

Here let us ask whether the signs of the times in which we are now living do not corroborate this Historical interpretation, and whether they do not indicate to us just that point in the era of the sixth Vial which has already been reached at the present date. No one will deny that the pernicious spirit of *infidelity* has gone forth with alarming activity and subtlety in this latter half of the nineteenth century, and especially during the last ten years. Perverted intellectual power is Satan's strongest lever for overturning the foundations of faith, and for loosening the bonds of truth and morality by which society is held together. Attacks on the inspiration of the Bible, on the sanctity of the Sabbath, and on the most essential points of Christian belief, are openly made

in the newspapers and magazines, in novels, and, more insidiously, even in the pages of professedly religious literature.

Nor are the other two agencies less bold and active. Both on their political and ecclesiastical side, the schemes of the Papacy are being pushed forward with a marvellous degree of astuteness and audacity. The persistent aim of the *Pope*, fostered by the Jesuits, and backed up by his clergy all over the world, is the restoration of the Temporal Power, and of Papal supremacy. There is no saying how soon the prosecution of these schemes may bring about an embroilment of the nations. Thus all three of the evil agencies are abroad. The seed is being sown, and in due time the crop will appear.[1]

It should be noted that these evil agencies are spoken of as "*working signs*" (ver. 14). With regard to signs wrought by the spirit proceeding from the mouth of the *Dragon*, we know that miracles have always been a marked characteristic of Satanic delusions. The heathen devil-worshippers, and the more cultivated Theosophists and Spiritualists, alike seek to bolster up their pernicious doctrines by an appeal to the supernatural. It is certain that there is much gross deception mixed up with such working of "signs," but able investigators assert that there is also something of reality. We need not be surprised if those who deliberately seek manifestations from the unseen world, and endeavour to hold communication with departed spirits, are allowed to become dupes and victims of the power of Satan and his evil hosts.

Then, as to the "signs" worked by the spirits proceeding from the mouth of the *Beast* and of the *False* Prophet, we have previously pointed out how the characteristic of miracles has marked the whole career of the Papacy and the Romish priesthood.[2] They still "work signs" before the people as a proof of Divine authority. And when the final schemes of the Papal Power are put into operation, we may be sure that *miraculous pretensions* will play their part. It is possible, too, that as the last years of this dispensation run out, Satan and his evil hosts, knowing that their time is short, may be especially active, and may even be allowed

[1] See what has already been said on this point, p. 206.

[2] See p. 150.

by God to put forth "signs and lying wonders" to a degree beyond anything that has yet been witnessed.

Let us now review our position, and see how we stand with regard to the events which we have shown to be foretold as destined to take place during the era of the sixth Vial in which we are now living. The drying up of the Euphrates has long been going on: the power of Turkey has long been declining. Our statesmen tell us "The Sick Man is sicker than ever." In our daily papers we read: "The Ottoman Empire exhibits all the signs of a state in dissolution." The way has begun to be made ready for the return of "the kings from the sunrising," the royal race of Israel, to their own land, which will be completed at the crisis of Christ's coming to overthrow His enemies and to reign. Those evil agencies symbolised by the three frog-like spirits, which are yet to embroil the world, have begun to show signs of increased activity. No one can deny that there is in the minds of thinking men, whose eyes are open to see the signs of the times, a presentiment that a great crisis is approaching in the history of our world. There ever lingers on the horizon the dark storm-cloud of the Eastern Question. Now and again it seems gathering to a head, and threatening to burst. But, as often happens in thundery weather, the storm is averted for a while. Yet there the cloud is still, waiting for the time fixed by God's eternal decree, and when that time comes the cloud of the Eastern Question will once more gather and come down, involving the nations in widespread calamity and destruction. There can be little doubt that in the crisis of the end of this dispensation the Eastern Question will play its part.

We have before given examples of the coincidence of political forecasts with the anticipations of prophetical students.[1] It may be interesting here, in connection with the Historical interpretation of the events of the sixth Vial which we have placed before our readers, to give the following extract from a leading article in one of our chief daily papers, which is only a sample of the political anticipations that are constantly appearing in the public prints. Referring to the question of active measures being taken

[1] See p. 208, and for a further instance, p. 405.

by the Powers in order to check Turkey in her infamous course of exterminating Armenian Christians, this article says, in words that read like a commentary on this passage of the Revelation: "With the firing of the first shot the whole of the Eastern Question, the bugbear of the diplomatist, the terror of the politician, the insoluble problem of statemanship, would be reopened with all its intricacy and its perils. Austria with her reversionary interests on the shores of the Black Sea and the Golden Horn; Greece with her perpetual hankering after Macedonia; Bulgaria, Servia, and Roumania, with all the rash intolerance of young and treaty-made states; Russia with her naval ambitions at the Dardanelles; France with her desire to rival Great Britain as a Mediterranean Power; and England herself, with her one predominant aim of keeping the route open to her Indian possessions [a policy affecting the occupation of Egypt and Palestine]—such would be the elements of rivalry and animosity let loose over the prostrate body of 'the Sick Man of Europe.' It is terrible to contemplate such a turmoil even in imagination."

Here, therefore, we may recognise our present position in the sixth Vial. We see the storm-cloud on the Eastern horizon, and we know that it will one day gather overhead, and the drops will begin to fall. That day may be near at hand or it may be years hence, for diplomacy is doing its utmost to avert it. But diplomatists know full well that it must come sooner or later. No diplomacy can prevent that which is decreed in the counsels of Providence, and marked down in the chart of God's prophetic Word. We do not know what time will be occupied by the train of events that will then be set in motion. But the full consequences of this great storm that is brewing will not reach their climax till the final crisis of the seventh Vial, to which we shall refer later on, when the Lord Himself will appear on the scene, victorious over all His enemies, and King over all the earth.[1]

And now what is the next great event indicated for us in the chart of prophecy given by St. John in this passage of the Revelation, as destined to take place in the remaining portion of

[1] See p. 402.

the sixth Vial, which we have yet to consider? It is even that great and glorious crisis of the Lord's coming which is foreshadowed by the words in verse 15, "Behold I come as a thief."

It is impossible not to be struck with the abrupt and striking manner in which this solemn announcement is introduced at this point of the sixth Vial. To come "as a thief" is the familiar Scriptural figure, adopted by our Lord and by St. Paul, for describing the *suddenness and unexpectedness* of the *first* stage of Christ's second coming, namely, that descent into the air, sudden as a flash of lightning, in order to take up His elect, which is described in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13–v. 4, where the same phrase occurs. The use of this figure, therefore, together with the corresponding abruptness of the announcement, indicates that at this point in the era of the sixth Vial that first stage of the Lord's coming will take place.

This passage conveys, too, the same warning which our Lord impressed upon His disciples in the parables of His prophetic discourse upon the Mount of Olives, and on other occasions, teaching us that if we would make sure of being of the number of His chosen ones, who will then be taken up to be with Him, and afterwards to enter on the glory of His millennial reign, we must see to it that we live the earnest, watchful Christian life, as opposed to the unwatchful, half-hearted, and slothful one. For St. John goes on to say: "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Dr. Gordon gives an interesting explanation of these words as follows: "All night long the Temple watchmen make their rounds of duty, never knowing at what hour their overseer would come in upon them to learn if they were vigilant and faithful. If, coming unawares, he found any watchman sleeping at his post, the penalty was that the offender should be stripped of his garments and turned out naked of his uniform, to his shame and confusion. 'Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. And if He come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.'"[1] It should be added that the blessing on the earnest, watchful, loving Christian life, though it has

[1] *Ecce Venit*, p. 207.

a special application to the generation found living when Christ comes, applies also to believers generally, and forms an essential feature in determining who will be the elect, the Bride of Christ.

This passage in the sixth Vial is one of the many hints in Scripture which certainly seem to indicate that there is a prize for the earnest, loving, watchful Christian life, for the "good and faithful servant," which will be missed by those who are content to remain at a low level, and who might rather be described as slothful servants. It constitutes one of the many warnings and exhortations given to us to be out and out, instead of only half and half for Christ. And, if we would wish to make sure of the prize of the first resurrection, we shall do well to take heed to such warnings. It should be noted that though such Scriptures have a special application to the generation found living when Christ returns, yet the principle involved seems clearly to apply to all believers, from the time of Abel down through the ages; and it forms an essential point in determining the question of who are likely to be the saints of the first resurrection, and to share in the Millennial reign of Christ. This point will be further noticed when we come to examine the account of the resurrections in Revelation xx.

In seizing this much, we must guard against being so misunderstood as to be supposed to imply in any way that salvation is by works. Salvation is by grace alone from beginning to end. The present question is one of *difference in position* amongst those saved by grace. Our Lord distinctly taught in His parables, as in the Pounds and the Talents, that there will be a distinction of position hereafter according to degrees of faithfulness; and in His last message from heaven He says, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is" (Rev. xxii. 12, R.V.). The question is whether the prize of the first resurrection may not be just such a distinction of position, bestowed as a reward for faithfulness.

We must add here a brief notice of Futurist exposition of the sixth Vial. They tell us that in the last days of this dispensation the river Euphrates is to be literally dried up, in order that the

way may be made ready for "the kings that come from the sunrising." As regards this latter expression, some admit that it may refer to the Israelites, as we have endeavoured to explain it. Other Futurist writers interpret this expression as meaning "the barbarous myriads of Central Asia." They think that a huge invasion from the East is going to take place in the latter days, and that these barbarous hordes will cross the Euphrates river-bed, and march to the attack of a rebuilt Babylon, or, as others interpret it, in order to invade Palestine.[1] As the Euphrates can easily be crossed, it is hard to see why a miracle should be necessary for either of these purposes. The three frog-like spirits they take to mean three demons, or unclean spirits, the one acting through Satan, the other two through the personalities of the individual Antichrist whom they expect, and his attendant prophet. The forces of the East, are, together with those of the West, to be under the command of the Antichrist and his prophet, and to perish in the war of Armageddon.

We have now followed the chart of the book of Revelation from the time of our Lord's first advent to the beginning of the events which will be immediately connected with His second coming. We have traced the course of the three connected sevenfold series, the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, and have shown their fulfilment during the present dispensation. Side by side with our explanation we have given examples of the Futurist system of literal interpretation, which throws forward the fulfilment of these visions into the few closing years of this age. We trust we have already furnished our readers with materials for forming a judgment between these two opposing methods of interpreting God's prophetic word. But perhaps it may help to bring out the truth of the Historical system yet more clearly if we take a *comprehensive* glance at the Futurist method

[1] B. W. Newton, *The Apocalypse*, p. 251. Seiss, *The Revelation*, p. 477. Other Futurist writers, departing from their system of literalism, take the drying up of the Euphrates to symbolise the exhaustion of the power of mystic Babylon, or the Papal Church, and "the kings from the sunrising" to mean the resurrection saints accompanying Christ on His return, which, they say, will be from the East. The Scriptures offered for this strange interpretation are Matthew xxiv. 27, and the vision of Ezekiel xliii. 2.

as it applies to the three sevenfold series of visions that we have been considering. For this purpose we will present these visions in parallel columns, briefly interpreted according to the Futurist writings which we have already quoted, and so view them all together.

Seals.	Trumpets.	Vials.
1. Anticipatory vision of second advent—or moral victories.	1. Storms over the world: hail, fire, blood: trees and grass burnt up—or destruction effected by abnormal atmospheric disturbances.	1. Sores on those who are branded with the mark of the Antichrist.
2. War and bloodshed.	2. Burning mountain turning sea into blood—or elements brought into collision by process unknown.	2. Sea turned into blood.
3. Injustice and distress.	3. A meteor strikes rivers and springs, making them bitter—bitterness and death brought into the waters of the earth.	3. Rivers and fountains turned into blood.
4. Death by sword, famine, beasts.	4. Sun, moon and stars darkened, enveloping world in gloom.	4. Tremendous outburst of solar heat.
5. Persecution and martyrdom for the truth.	5. Creatures like scorpion locusts flying about and tormenting people — or, evil spirits, with Satan as their head, going forth over the world.	5. Darkness over the dominions of the Antichrist.
6. Final catastrophe.	6. Two hundred million spirit-horses, lion-headed, etc., stifling, burning and tormenting people—or else, an army of fiends let loose by four angels bound at the Euphrates.	6. Literal drying up of the Euphrates, in order that Israelites, or hordes from Central Asia, may attack a rebuilt Babylon, or else Judæa. Three demons emanating from Satan, Antichrist, and his prophet.
7. Silence in heaven.	7. Crisis of the end.	7. Crisis of the end. Literal hailstorm of huge blocks of ice.

If there is one thing more plainly stamped upon these visions than another, it is the characteristic of succession; that the various eras or events foreshadowed, whatever they may be, begin

one after another in regular order. If our readers will attempt to make out from the series of visions, as they stand in the above scheme, an orderly succession of such eras or events, interpreted according to Futurist views, and all to take place during a few years at the close of this dispensation, we think that the confusion, improbability, not to say impossibility of such a fulfilment will be obvious. On the other hand, the Historical interpretation not only presents an intelligible and orderly explanation of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials, but also shows the remarkable way in which, with all their striking details, they have been fulfilled during the course of this dispensation. We are only waiting for the concluding portion of the sixth Vial, and the pouring out of the seventh, to put the finishing touch to the proof of the truth of the Historical method of interpreting their symbolic and prophetic visions.

It should be noted that there is an obvious allusion in the Vials to some of the judgments poured out upon Egypt. Those judgments evidently furnished the imagery of the visions seen by St. John in this series. And just as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah stands as a typical picture of the punishment of gross sin, so the plagues of Egypt are typical judgments on obstinate refusal to listen to God's warnings. Five of the Egyptian plagues, not taken in order, are thus symbolically introduced into these visions—the sores, the change in the waters of the Nile, the darkness, the frogs, and the hail. The fact that these plagues supply the imagery of the visions is no reason for supposing that they are going to be literally repeated, or that rivers, and springs, and seas are going to be turned into bitterness or blood.

The Historical system does not deny that great physical disturbances may mark the crisis of the close of this dispensation. Our Lord's words in Matthew xxiv. 29 seem to indicate such phenomena : " Immediately, after the tribulation of those days [*i.e.* at the actual crisis of the end which will mark the close of the Great Tribulation] the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Alford says on this : "The physical signs shall happen (see Joel ii. 31 ; Haggai ii. 6,

21, compared with Heb. xii. 26, 27) as accompaniments and intensifications of the awful state of things which the description typifies." Again, the way in which St. Peter quoted Joel's prophecy on the day of Pentecost seems to lead to the same conclusion: "And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day."[1] Joel's remarkable prophecy deals with the whole of this dispensation. The morning of this age began with the peaceful life-giving outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the evening will close in a tremendous convulsion and outpouring of judgments.

It should be noted that St. Peter inserts the words "above," "signs," "beneath," which are not in the Hebrew, and so he seems to emphasise the idea of some extraordinary physical manifestations in the air and on earth. It is a matter of common observation that the thickening of the atmosphere from any cause produces obscuration of light, and also, under certain circumstances, a blood-red tint on the face of the sun or moon. Both these phenomena seem to be alluded to. Such a thickening of the atmosphere would be a natural accompaniment of volcanic outbursts. The remarkable red sunsets of some years back were accounted for by scientists as being occasioned by the dispersion of fine volcanic dust in the higher regions of the atmosphere after the tremendous eruption at Krakatoa. It is possible, too, that at this crisis there may be an extraordinary display of the well-known phenomenon of meteoric showers, and that this is included in the prophecy. The language of the sixth Seal (which, as we showed when explaining that vision, besides its primary application to the fall of Paganism, points on to the time of Christ's coming), suggests the same possibility. The fact that such language was used in a purely figurative sense by the prophets of old to denote great national convulsions, of which we gave examples, in no way precludes the idea of an extraordinary manifestation of such phenomena at the actual crisis of our Lord's descent to the earth when He comes to set up His kingdom. Rather, as Alford remarks, it might lead us to expect something of the kind,

[1] Acts ii. 19, 20 (R.V.).

as exhibiting the appropriateness of the symbolic imagery. Again, the analogy of previous indications of God's method at the close of dispensations, and at great crises, points to the same conclusion. Extraordinary physical phenomena accompanied the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ, and, it is said, the destruction of Jerusalem. There is a direct prophecy in Zechariah xiv. of a tremendous earthquake in Palestine at the crisis of our Lord's return, and similar terrestrial phenomena are foretold by Ezekiel and other prophets. We may well believe also that the wars, famines, and pestilences, foretold by Christ as destined to happen in the course of this dispensation, may possibly be increased in extent and gravity as the end of the present age closes in gloom. All this is in entire harmony with the Historical interpretation of prophecy, although it is deemed wiser not to attempt to enter too much into detail, or to speak positively with regard to such matters, still in the future, and only seen "in a mirror darkly," as it were, in God's prophetic word.

It is one of the mistakes of the Futurist system—a system which we have endeavoured to show to be grounded on error throughout—that it regards the three sevenfold series of visions, which we have been considering, as if they were literal descriptions of such phenomena as we have seen to be possible in the last days, instead of being something very different, namely, symbolic visions given to St. John in order to foreshadow eras and events of tremendous importance relating to the Church and the world, which were to come to pass in succession during the whole course of this dispensation.

In concluding this portion of our inquiry, we would once more direct attention to the important words of Dr. Craven in Lange's Commentary, which we have previously quoted with reference to the Trumpet series. The thought thus presented furnishes a very strong confirmation of the general truth of the whole Historical system, the force of which, we should think, must be conclusive to any mind not previously influenced by bias in the other direction. The argument is as follows: "The resemblance is not merely between the individual symbols and the events which have

been adduced as fulfilling them respectively, but it is a resemblance between the entire series regarded as a whole, and the entire course of history—it extends to the relation of the symbols to each other, their succession and mutual proportions."

The above argument should weigh with those who, while feeling compelled to admit the truth of the Historical fulfilment, are nevertheless unwilling to believe that Futurism is wrong, and who therefore endeavour to make a compromise by suggesting that both systems may be true.

Surely it must be evident, we should think, to all who have followed thus far the minute and marvellous fulfilment of these symbolic prophecies in the many and complex details of the long chain of events which have been taking place during the centuries of this dispensation—each event happening in accordance with its proper place in the order of visions—that it is unreasonable, not to say impossible, to expect that all this is going to be acted over again during the last few years of this dispensation on the Futurist scale, and that the many and minute descriptions will receive another and literal fulfilment.

To take one or two links, for example, out of the long chain, we cannot suppose that the fifth and sixth Trumpets which, as we have seen, foretold in all the minuteness of detail, the spread of the dark errors of the Koran and the invasions of *Saracen* hordes at the beginning of the seventh century, followed some centuries later by the scourge of the *Turkish* invasions of Europe, are to be also understood as foretelling something perfectly different; namely, that during the last few years of this dispensation, two swarms of evil spirits of a peculiar kind will emerge from the home of Satan to overspread the earth. Again, to take another example, the *time for the rise and development* of the Antichrist, as foretold by St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians ii., must either be that fixed upon by Historical interpreters, namely, the epoch of the break up of the old Roman Empire and its subdivision into the separate kingdoms of Europe, or it is some crisis still to come, as Futurists hold. It cannot be both. So, again, with regard to the *hindrance* which St. Paul said was in his time preventing the development of the Antichrist, that hindrance cannot possibly mean what Historicists believe it to have been, namely, the presence of

the Cæsars in Rome, and also, as Futurists suppose, the presence of the Holy Spirit, or the Church, or law, in the world, which presence they think is yet to be taken out of the way. We must choose between one or the other explanation. The idea that the Historical and Futurist views are both right, however some may desire to effect such a compromise, is a theory which, plausible as at first sight it may appear, is found, when the attempt is made to carry it out logically and in detail, to be utterly impracticable.

It may, indeed, be true, as we have previously suggested at the conclusion of our inquiry into the question of the Antichrist, that something analogous to *some* of the more important events that have taken place during the long period of this dispensation, may also happen at the close of it, just as certain crises in the Old Testament history have found an analogy in later times. It may be true that physical phenomena, which have happened before, may be manifested in an unusual degree at the actual crisis of the end. But this is quite a different thing from the repetition of the whole lengthy and complex chain of events, each in its proper place, with all the minute details, which form the subject of the mass of the prophecies in the Revelation. Moreover, if such anticipations are entertained, it should be with modesty and caution, as a theory the truth of which remains to be proved, and not as a positive statement concerning the future. As to the principle of literal interpretation which has given rise to these Futurist anticipations, we have endeavoured to show that to adopt this method of explaining the Apocalypse is to mistake the language in which these prophecies are written. We trust that it has been made plain to our readers that *symbolism*, not literalism, is stamped upon the Book of Revelation as its general characteristic.

At the point we have now reached in our inquiry we pass from fulfilled into unfulfilled prophecy; and the further consideration of that deeply interesting and mysterious topic will occupy the rest of the volume

CHAPTER VII

A BRIEF GLANCE AT THE NATURE AND ORDER OF EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE COMING OF CHRIST

THE era of the Sixth Vial is still the subject of our consideration, and we have now to notice the closing portion of it, which is introduced by the wonderful event to which we have referred, and for which Christians are, or rather should be, ever looking and waiting, namely, the sudden coming of the Lord Jesus to take up His elect.

In a previous part of our inquiry[1] we have briefly noticed what we must now explain a little more fully, and that is, that Christ's second coming will be in two stages, first *for* His saints and afterwards *with* them; and that the *former* should always be regarded as an event which may take place at any time, or, at least, as that which may possibly be very close at hand; whilst it is foretold in Scripture that before the *latter* stage of Christ's coming certain events must happen. Without this distinction, the various prophecies on this subject seem full of confusion; with it, all the details fall into their proper place. As, at Christ's first advent, there were two stages,—first, His coming into the world in infancy, accompanied by miraculous manifestations to a few, and then, after an interval of about thirty years, a second stage when there was an open manifestation before the Jewish world, namely, His coming forth in His official character and public ministry, accompanied by still more wonderful manifestations of the supernatural—so there is Scriptural reason to believe it will be at His second advent.[2]

[1] See p 259.

[2] Of the two Greek words chiefly used to denote the second coming of Christ, *parousia* and *epiphaneia*, the former is the more general and compre-

The first stage, of which we are now speaking, will be a sudden and startling event, as we have said, which we are to regard as *possibly close at hand.* Our Lord's teaching on this point is clear and emphatic. Speaking to His disciples, He said: "Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye [not merely the world, but Christians also] think not the Son of Man cometh." "Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."[1] Nothing can exceed the plainness of these directions. They are the marching orders for Christians all down through this present dispensation till the Lord comes for His elect. Indeed, as we have previously mentioned, to come "as a thief" was the well-known figure of speech which was adopted by our Lord and His apostles to denote the suddenness and unexpectedness of His coming whenever it takes place.[2] St. Paul says to the Thessalonians: "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." The same idea of suddenness and momentary surprise occurs in the Parable of the Virgins. They were all slumbering when the cry arose, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." It will be a surprise to all. The difference will be that some will be found *ready,* whilst others

hensive term. It literally means *presence,* and is commonly used of the first stage, though sometimes the second stage is included in the meaning, the whole epoch of the coming being regarded as one event. The other term, *epiphaneia,* signifies *open manifestation.* It is the appropriate expression for the second stage, when Christ will openly manifest Himself, with supernatural accompaniments of Divine majesty and glory, as the rightful King over the earth. The distinction between the use of these terms, however, need not be too rigidly pressed. In 2 Thessalonians ii. 8, where the reference is to the second stage, both expressions are found: "The manifestation of His coming [*marg.*, presence.]"

[1] Matt. xxiv. 42–44; Mark xiii. 35–37. R.V.

[2] See what has been said on this on page 372.

will be more or less unprepared for the event. Good Dr. Marsh of Beckenham wrote, some thirty years ago, with reference to this point as follows. Speaking of the truth of Christ's coming in two stages, he says: "It removes the difficulty which arises from not distinguishing between Christ's coming *into* the air (1 Thess. iv. 15–18) and His coming *on* to the earth. *The former may be any day*, the latter not until the Jews are restored [*i.e.* as we have explained, *partially* restored and in a state of unconversion.][1] . . . But oh, what a practical subject is the uncertainty of the day of the coming in the air which may be any day, and what a joyful subject is the coming to the earth! for till then the great enemy has possession."

Some writers on prophecy have found a difficulty in accepting the teaching that Christ may come *any* day. They point to the fact that the Lord intimated to St. Peter his martyrdom in old age: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee."[2] They add that St. Paul, towards the end of his career, told the Ephesian elders that, after his departing from them, "wolves shall enter in,"[3] implying a continuance of the Church in after years; and, further than this, they point out that he himself sometimes seemed to anticipate martyrdom. But these objections are absolutely pointless so far as *we* are concerned. Whatever difficulty in the way of accepting the doctrine of the possibility of Christ's coming at any time may have been occasioned to the *early* Church by the passages above quoted, they present none to *us*. Whatever intimations might have been given to individuals, the general attitude enjoined is clear. Moreover, it is essential to remember that objections can be framed against almost any doctrine of Scripture, if we allow our minds to dwell only upon one or two texts. We must compare *all* that is said on the question, and take into consideration all the circumstances of the case, before

[1] See p. 360.

[2] John xxi. 18. It should be noted, however, that, immediately afterwards our Lord added words which seemed to suggest, and were so understood at the time by the disciples, that His coming might be near, in the lifetime of John. *See* verses 20–23.

[3] Acts xx. 29.

we can form a just conclusion. If we do this with regard to the present question, the difficulties vanish. We see that God has purposely clothed His revelation concerning the return of the Lord Jesus in some degree of mystery. He has concealed whilst revealing. Some details He has told us plainly. As regards others He has for wise reasons left us in uncertainty. The "times and seasons" in relation to our Lord's coming are among those points on which a degree of mystery rests. Some of our Lord's words seem to throw out a hint of His long absence during this dispensation, as when He speaks of the going into a "*far* country," in the Parable of the Pounds, and of the *returning* of the Lord "after a *long* time," in the Parable of the Talents, and of the *tarrying* of the Bridegroom in the Parable of the Virgins. In other passages He, to whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," speaks of His return "in a little while."[1] So, in the Revelation, we read, "Behold, I come quickly," "Surely, I come quickly." The words of St. James to persecuted Christians of his day seem to point in the same direction,—"Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. . . . for the coming of the Lord is at hand. . . . Behold, the Judge standeth before the doors."[2] So, again, St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, speaks as if they might look for the coming of the Lord in their own day: "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life"—referring to that sudden transformation into the glorious body of the resurrection life, without passing through death, which would be the privilege of all faithful servants found living at the time of Christ's coming, and of which he had previously written to them as follows: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Similarly St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "Then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them

[1] John xvi. 16. These words in their *ultimate* fulfilment, as Alford shows, refer to His second coming.

[2] Jas. v. 7–9, compare 1 Pet. iv. 7.

be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." On the former of these passages Alford says: "The feeling expressed in these verses was one most natural to those who, as the Apostles, regarded the coming of the Lord as *near*, and conceived the possibility of their living to behold it." And on the latter, "we that are alive, etc.," he adds, "in which number he firmly believed that he himself would be." We see, therefore, they were intended to live in an attitude of watchfulness and expectation.[1]

It is true that St. Paul told the Thessalonians, in his second Epistle (2 Thess. ii.) that "the day of the Lord" would not be until after the great apostasy and the revelation of the Antichrist should take place. But in that passage his words refer to the *second* stage of Christ's coming, namely, when He will come to execute judgment upon His adversaries, and to the great Tribulation which will immediately precede that crisis. Those Thessalonians were in such dire distress that some thought the time of tribulation, "the day of the Lord," had begun to set in. Paul showed them this could not be. He besought them not to be troubled "as that the day of the Lord is now present." He reminded them, verse 1, about the *first* stage of Christ's coming, and the "gathering together unto Him," meaning that rapture of the saints which he had taught them, in his first epistle, to regard as what might take place at any time, or, at all events, might possibly be close at hand, and which would come suddenly, "like a thief in the night," and *after* which the time of travail was to come on. As that first stage had not taken place, his argument showed that the tribulation connected with the *second* stage of Christ's coming could not have set in. He then added the further special revelation, that before the final tribulation which they thought was upon them, there must come the great apostasy and the manifestation of the Antichrist. Hence this prediction of St. Paul to the Thessalonians foretold to them nothing that must take place before the *first* stage of Christ's coming. With reference to *that*, since it would come "as a thief in the night," he told them that they were always *to be on the watch*.[2]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52 (*see* Alford's notes on these passages); 1 Thess. iv. 17.

[2] 1 Thess. v. 2, 6. It should be remembered, however, that there is no

We see, therefore, that prophecy does not speak of any great event in the world that must necessarily intervene before the *first* stage of Christ's coming, namely, His coming into the air to take up His saints. The passages which we have quoted, and our Lord's repeated warnings to disciples to be on the watch, "lest haply . . . that day come upon you unawares," [1] show that uncertainty and expectancy, to be on the watch and to be ready, is the general attitude enjoined upon Christians throughout this dispensation. The interval which must elapse between the two stages of His coming, but of which the duration is not clearly revealed, allows time for everything which has yet to take place before the *second* stage, namely, His descent on to the earth *with* His saints to set up His kingdom. Like as the Jews, working under the orders of Nehemiah for the reparation of the walls of Jerusalem, and expecting a sudden attack from their enemies, were commanded to work and watch, ready at any moment to answer to the sound of the trumpet in case of a surprise, since they could not tell when the enemy might be upon them; so, the Lord Jesus has bidden His followers, during His absence, to maintain an attitude of working and watching, ready for the sounding of "the trump of God," which shall announce His coming into the air to gather to Him His saints: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye (disciples) think not the Son of Man cometh." "But watch ye at every season." [2] What if St. Peter received a special intimation from Christ that he would not die till he was old? This cannot for a moment be allowed to supersede the emphatic injunctions, repeated again and again, as we have seen in the passages quoted, and referring to the whole of this dispensation, that we are to live in the anticipation that our Lord may come for us at any time, or, at least, that this glorious event, which will take the world by surprise, may possibly be close at hand.

As we have already said, it is of the *first* stage that St. Paul

reason to believe that the apostles, any more than the Old Testament prophets (*see* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11), fully understood all the details connected with the predictions they were inspired to utter.

[1] Luke xxi. 34, R.V.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 44; Luke xxi. 36, R.V.

speaks in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, whilst, in his second epistle, he dwells rather upon the *second* stage. *It is with regard to this second stage* of Christ's coming that it was foretold in prophecy that *several important events must first come to pass*, such as the revelation of the Antichrist referred to by St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians ii., which has already taken place in the rise and manifestation of the Papacy, the partial return of the Jews to Palestine in a state of unconversion which is now taking place, and the Great Tribulation which is still future, and possibly near at hand. It needs a careful study of the context, and of all the circumstances of the case, in order correctly to assign the various allusions and prophecies connected with the Lord's return to that particular stage of His coming to which they refer. Some expressions refer to the one, some to the other, while some, again, in accordance with that frequent feature of the perspective of prophecy, speak of the two events as forming together one great crisis in the world's history.

It is only in keeping with the enjoined attitude of expectation that there should be something of mystery and uncertainty in connection with many of the prophecies about this subject, as, for example, in our Lord's prediction that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come."[1] Here it is left uncertain how much preaching would constitute, according to the mind and purpose of God, a *testimony* to the nations, or what degree of universality was indicated by the expression "the whole world." It is certain that this latter phrase is sometimes used in Scripture, by a figure of speech common in the East, to denote *wide extension*. St. Paul, for example, writing to the Colossians, speaks of the gospel as being "come unto you, even as it is also in all the world." Hence it should be noticed that this sign, namely, the wide preaching of the gospel, was thus *primarily* fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem, which completed the end of the Jewish dispensation. That remarkable manifestation of judgment was a type of the judgments that are to be outpoured at the close of the present dispensation. And just as when the gospel had been widely proclaimed over the Roman world,

[1] Matt. xxiv. 14, R.V.

judgment fell upon the Jewish nation, so, now, the remarkable way in which the Gospel has been widely preached over the heathen world during the last century, and especially at the present time, is one of the many signs that the closing epoch of this dispensation is near at hand. Doubt may have been felt by believers in past ages with regard to the meaning of our Lord's words quoted above, but for us there can hardly be any.

Perhaps it may be objected that the doctrine of the possibility of Christ's coming at any time is contrary to the historical interpretation of the book of Revelation, according to which a long succession of events was foreshadowed, reaching through the whole course of this dispensation. The reply to this, however, is obvious. A veil of uncertainty was intended to hang, and has hung, over the interpretation of this mysterious book. Not being *certain* of the meaning of the visions, readers of past ages could not feel sure that they foretold anything that must happen before that first stage of Christ's coming of which we have spoken. The reference of those wonderful symbolic predictions to the various events of history has only gradually and with difficulty been recognised. The Apocalypse has doubtless afforded *some* light and comfort to God's children all along, according as some of its main features were discerned; but it was only like the Channel lights seen by a mariner through the fog,—enough to steer by, but no details of coast line visible with certainty. As history, however, has rolled on, the mist has gradually been lifting. One point after another, marked in the chart of prophecy, has come into view and been recognised. And now we seem to see clearly where we are, and have reason to believe that the first stage of the Lord's coming is not likely to be very much longer delayed, and may possibly, indeed, be very near.

Sound

But not only is the first stage of Christ's coming into the air to take up His saints a *sudden* event, it is also to be *accompanied by a startling sound.* In the special revelation on this subject given to St. Paul we read: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."[1] The word for "shout" is that used for the

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 16.

signal-shout which a captain gives to his soldiers. We cannot be certain whether the three descriptions given refer to one sound only, or to more than one; but it seems clear that this crisis will be announced to the world by some loud and startling supernatural sound.

In connection with this it is interesting to notice that two previous remarkable manifestations of God have been similarly proclaimed by a supernatural sound. When God "descended in fire" upon Mount Sinai, we read: "And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and *the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud*; and all the people that were in the camp trembled."[1] So again, when the descent of God the Holy Ghost was manifested at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, we read: "And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. . . . And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together" (Acts ii. 6, R.V., not "when this was noised abroad," as in the A.V.). This loud and sudden sound, heard all over Jerusalem, brought the people from all parts to the quarter from whence it seemed to proceed. Just so, but in a far greater and more universal degree, when the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air takes place, in order to gather His saints, which will be the first stage of His coming, or "*parousia*," the event will be announced by a loud and startling supernatural sound, according to St. Paul's description.

We should also compare St. Paul's other description of the same great event in his epistle to the Corinthians. Speaking of the whole body of the elect of this dispensation, he says: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (still speaking of the elect) shall be raised incorruptible, and we (picturing himself, as in 1 Thessalonians iv. 15, amongst those that would be then living) shall be changed."[2]

[1] Exod. xix. 16.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 51. The "last trump" spoken of in these prophecies must not be confounded, as is often done by speakers and writers, with the

We often hear of the theory of a "*secret* rapture" of the saints, the idea being that the supernatural trumpet sound spoken of by the apostle will only be heard by believers, and not by the unconverted world. But there seems no good reason for such a supposition. On the contrary, all through Scripture the idea of *publicity*, not of secrecy, is associated with the trumpet. When that awful sound was heard on Mount Sinai it was not merely audible to some—to Moses and the elders, for instance—but all the people in the camp heard it and trembled. So, at Pentecost, it was not merely the apostles and believers who heard the mysterious rushing sound; it echoed all over Jerusalem, and the unconverted multitudes hastened from all quarters to see what it meant. Just so, therefore, we may well believe that, when the Lord Jesus descends into the air to take up His elect saints, the tremendous sound that will accompany that event will in all probability be heard far and wide over the world.

Doubtless, the *savants* will say that the sound was merely occasioned by some extraordinary electrical disturbance. Indeed, it may be that the agency of electricity will be employed by God at that crisis in order to produce a manifestation of supernatural thunder; for He employs the forces ordinarily at work in nature in order to bring about extraordinary effects when it pleases Him: "Who maketh His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire." But those who accept the inspired Word will recognise in this manifestation "the finger of God."

The miraculous taking up of the saints at this crisis was alluded to by our Lord in His prophecy on the Mount of Olives:[1] "Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left." The further detail given in St. Luke's account of the prophecy

seventh trumpet of the Revelation. The latter was heard by St. John in vision, and had been preceded by six similar soundings. The trump of which St. Paul speaks will be heard in reality, and has not been preceded by six other soundings. It is called the *last* trump, as Alford says, because it will occur at the *end* of this dispensation. The seventh trumpet which John heard denoted a lengthened period, as we have explained, reaching up to the end. The supernatural trumpet sound to which St. Paul here refers as "the last trump" will usher in the closing epoch of that period.

[1] Matt. xxiv. 40, 41; Luke xvii. 34 (R.V.).

—"In that night there shall be two men on one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left"—shows that this separation will take place all over the world, in the hemisphere which is in the light, and also in that which is in darkness. If it is asked what is likely to be the effect upon the world at large of such a sudden and startling event as the sounding of "the last trump" and the rapture of the elect saints, we can only say that we may well hope and believe that some, perhaps many, will be awakened into repentance. Here we have something to meet the perplexity of many of God's children, who ask, How can I long for Christ to come when those who are very dear to me are not ready to meet Him? Is it not possible that the solemn and startling event of the Lord's coming, and the sad experience of finding themselves left behind to face the judgment that will follow, might prove to be just the one thing which, by God's grace, will open their eyes, and touch their hearts, so that, though they will have missed the prize of the first resurrection they will nevertheless be found amongst the number of the saved at the final day of judgment? On the other hand, just as, in the time of the great plague, we are told that some were turned to repentance, while others only became more hardened and reckless, so it may be again, when the judgments of the great Tribulation are abroad. Our Lord's words in the Parable of Dives, and His whole experience during His ministry, show clearly enough that when men's hearts are deliberately set to resist the strivings of the Spirit and to reject the sufficient evidence which God has given of the truth of His Word, they will not be convinced even by a manifestation of the miraculous: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."

St. Paul's description in 1 Thessalonians iv., which we are considering, goes on to show, verse 17, that, immediately upon the sounding of "the trump of God," at the first stage of Christ's coming, a resurrection from the graves will take place. He says: "And the dead in Christ shall rise first [*i.e.* before the rapture of the living saints]: then we that are alive, that are left [here, as in 1 Cor. xv. 52, before quoted, St. Paul, in accordance with his hope, though his words contain no direct assertion of the fact, pictures himself as amongst the living at the time of the

Lord's return],[1] shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This is the *first* resurrection—the resurrection of the elect, the same that is spoken of by St. Paul, in his well-known statement concerning the order of the resurrection, in 1 Corinthians xv. 23, as "then they that are Christ's at His coming."

In our explanation of that passage[2] we have shown how the three great Hebrew Feasts symbolized the three resurrections of which St. Paul there speaks, namely, "Christ the first-fruits; then [*i.e.* next in the order of the resurrection] they that are Christ's, at His coming. Then [literally *next in order, after that*: see *Grimm's Lexicon*] cometh the end [*i.e.* the final resurrection and general judgment, which will take place at the *end* of the Millennium.]" St. Paul further adds words which indicate *the duration of Christ's reign, as filling up the interval between these two resurrections:* "For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." The Millennium is not to be a perfect state, though it will be a vast improvement upon the present. Sin, and its penalty, death, will still exist, as we know from Isaiah lxv. 20. Indeed, at the closing epoch of the Millennial reign, as we shall explain more at large later on, there will be a terrible manifestation of both these powers, as we are told in Revelation xx. 7–9. But then, at last the time will arrive, at the *end* of Christ's reign and the beginning of the Eternal state, when *all* enemies will be put under His feet, when there shall be no more death, or sin, or pain, or sorrow. This will be the time of the *final resurrection and general judgment*, when Death, and Hades, and Satan, and the lost, are to be consigned to "the lake of fire," as we read in Revelation xx. When that time comes Christ's mediatorial and redemptive work will be finished, and He will hand back, as it were, to the Father the lost province of this earth, which He will then have restored to perfect obedience and happiness. Thus St. Paul goes on to say in this passage of 1 Corinthians xv. 28:—"And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all."

[1] See what has been said on this p. 384. [2] See p. 314.

Having now considered the first stage of Christ's coming, which we have shown to be what is indicated by the sudden announcement, "Behold I come as a thief" (Rev. xvi. 15),[1] let us proceed with our examination of the vision of the Sixth Vial.

Immediately after this announcement we read, verse 16: "And they [*i.e.* the three special evil influences before described] gathered them [*i.e.* the kings and their armies, who are to be involved in the final war] together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon" (R.V.).

From this brief anticipatory and summary statement we may conclude that after Christ has come "as a thief,"—after the first resurrection and the taking up of the saints,—the evil influences symbolised in the vision, influences that are even now at work, will enter upon a stage of increased activity, which, in its ultimate issue, will involve the world, or at all events the world of Christendom, in a state of general distress and revolution, leading up to the final war of Armageddon. This period of increased activity on the part of the three evil agencies working mischief amongst mankind may be regarded as the epoch of the great Tribulation, though that term more particularly applies to the stage of intensified distress and anarchy unto which it will develop just before the end. Thus it will be seen that this epoch falls, as we have previously noticed, *within the era of the Sixth Vial*, and is, indeed, its distinguishing feature and climax. That the great Tribulation should not be more fully particularized in this vision, is only in accordance with the frequent feature of apocalyptic prophecy, that what is clearly foretold in one part of Scripture is often only briefly alluded to in another, or even passed over altogether. We shall see later on that the final great storm, in which the epoch of the Tribulation will end, forms the subject of the *Seventh* Vial.

We may here notice how this narrative of the events of the Sixth Vial period is in harmony with the many other indications given to us in Scripture that the rapture of the saints of the first resurrection will take place *before* the great Tribulation. The same truth had been previously signified in the book of Revelation. In the last two of the brief anticipatory visions which we

[1] See p. 372.

find in Revelation xiv.,[1] this gathering of the saints is what is alluded to in the *first*, namely, the harvest of *grain*. In this vision "one like unto the Son of man," *i.e.* Christ Himself, as in i. 13, is seen as the prime Agent in the reaping of the earth, or gathering of His own elect. The vision, like the rest in this chapter, is viewed by St. John on the *earthly* landscape, but the angel who brings the injunction to "reap," is a messenger from above of the will of God, in whose hands are the times and seasons; so he comes direct from the Temple in the *heavenly* scene. In the *second* vision, that of the *vintage* (the well-known Scriptural emblem for *judgment* inflicted upon God's enemies), which comes *after* the harvest of grain, and in which the angel of judgment, not Christ, is represented as the prime agent, we have an obvious intimation that the outpouring of tribulation and judgment, which is to mark the close of this dispensation, will come *after* the elect have been taken up to be ever with their Lord, safe out of reach of the storm which will burst below.[2]

The same truth is taught in many other passages of Scripture. It is shown by the three great historical analogies which are specially mentioned by our Lord in His prophecy on the Mount of Olives, in connection with this very subject, namely, the time of the Flood, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the destruction of Jerusalem. In all these cases the Lord's people were removed to a place of safety *before* the cup of judgment was finally poured out. Again, it is shown by our Lord's direct statements. We have previously quoted His words in the same prophecy, concerning His coming, "One shall be taken [*i.e.* up into the air to meet the Lord], and the other shall be left"—left for what, but to experience the epoch of judgment that will follow? So, in Luke xxi. 8, after dwelling on the time of special tribulation that is to take place in connection with His

[1] This chapter has already been briefly explained. See p. 339, etc.

[2] Some interpreters, such as Elliott and others, take *both* these two visions as if they referred to the punishment of the wicked; but this entirely misses the distinction drawn in Scripture between the *grain harvest* and the *vintage*, and thus introduces confusion, and is a needless repetition. Alford reviews the whole question, and shows that the explanation given above is the true one.

second coming, Christ says: "When these things *begin* to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." Still more plainly does the Lord express this comforting thought in His concluding exhortation to watchfulness in the same chapter: "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man"—literally, as explained by Alford, *to be set* before the Son of man; *i.e.*, to be placed there in a position of safety and privilege by His angels, who, at His command, are to gather His elect unto Him, as stated in Matthew xxiv. 31.

The same truth is taught in the book of Revelation in the messages to the Churches, which contain continual references to the privileges that the Lord Jesus will bestow upon His faithful ones when He comes again. We there find these comforting words addressed to the whole-hearted Philadelphian Christians: "Because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."[1]

Lastly, the same comforting fact is implied in Revelation xix. When the Lord Jesus descends from heaven to finish the war of Armageddon, and to end the great Tribulation, the company of the saints *descends with Him*, thus showing that their rapture must *previously* have taken place.

It is necessary, however, to look into a few passages, which, at first sight, indeed, seem to point in the other direction; but which, when they are examined carefully, can be shown to be in harmony with the Scriptures which have been brought forward.

[1] Rev. iii. 10, R.V. Lange well points out that the preposition "*from*" in this passage does not mean "through" and "out of," as some would translate it, but "away from." He says: "The promise is not of preservation *in* trial, as was the promise to Peter, Luke xxii. 32; but of preservation *from* the hour or period of trial."

The translation of the phrase in Grimm's Greek Lexicon of the N.T. is "to keep one at a distance from," which is precisely the meaning that justifies our view.

We may add that Dr. Craven, the learned editor of Lange, also adopts the view we have given above. Speaking of the great Tribulation, he says it is "a tribulation from which the saints are to be exempt, a period in the beginning of which their humiliation is to end."—Lange, *The Revelation*, p. 220.

First, let us look at the well-known description in the prophecy by our Lord on the Mount of Olives: "But immediately, after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: . . . and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And [St. Mark inserts "then"] He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."[1]

At first sight this seems as if the taking up of the saints would be after the tribulation; but this is just one of those many cases in Scripture, where the full light afforded by comparing what is said in another place, clears up difficulties and brings all into harmony. In the corresponding passage of St. Luke, after the words, "coming in the clouds with power and great glory," there follows the important statement, which we have already quoted, revealing the point of time at which the rapture will take place, and showing that it will be *before* the great Tribulation: "But when these things begin to come to pass [*i.e.* when the signs of the times seem to indicate the approach of the Tribulation previously described], look up, and lift up your heads [in contrast to "men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world," which had just before been mentioned], because your redemption draweth nigh."[2] The word "then" in the above passages, therefore, does not mean "next in order," as denoting the stages of Christ's coming; but, speaking of the coming as one great event, it means "at that epoch," namely, the great epoch of the second advent which is being described. The precise *order* of time with regard to the rapture is given, as we have said, in the words quoted from St. Luke. Thus, by comparing the accounts, and bearing in mind the analogy of the Flood and the destruction of Sodom expressly mentioned for our guidance, we can see that our Lord's prediction was to the

[1] Matt. xxiv. 29–31, R.V. We have previously given a brief explanation of the difficult and involved prophecy on Mount Olivet. See p. 74.

[2] Luke xxi. 25–28.

following effect: "Then, at the epoch of My second coming, there will be a period of great tribulation; and when there are signs of its approach, do not be terrified, as if you would have to undergo those miseries, but rather lift up your heads, because that will be the time of your redemption. For I will first send My angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together My chosen ones unto Me, so that they shall be in a place of safety with Me, out of reach of the tribulation which will follow." [1]

Similarly, St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians v., when dealing with the same question, after describing how, when Christ comes suddenly, "like a thief in the night," to take up His elect, the period of tribulation will then set in upon those who are unprepared, adds words of comfort indicating that the rapture of the saints will take place *before* the "wrath" of the tribulation: "For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep [when He comes], we should live together with Him" (R.V.)

There are two obscure references which need a few words of explanation in connection with this subject. In that part of our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives, which, as we have previously shown, relates to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, and the

[1] It may be well to notice here an error met with in some Futurist writings. They explain the gathering by the angels alluded to in our Lord's prophecy, quoted above, as if it referred to a partial or secondary taking up of saints *after* the tribulation, namely, of those who, not having been gathered with the main body at the beginning of the tribulation, nevertheless become converted or martyred in the course of it, and so are caught up afterwards to have their place amongst those who constitute the saints of the first resurrection, or the Bride. But there is no Scriptural reason at all for believing that the Bride of Christ will be collected in different portions, or at different times. The gathering alluded to by our Lord, in the above passage of Matthew, is clearly that one glorious gathering of His chosen ones, described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians xv. and 1 Thessalonians iv., which is heralded forth by "the trump of God." Moreover, the whole point of the Parable of the Virgins, and of our Lord's warning in connection with it, which is a special revelation on this subject, goes to show that those not ready at the moment of the Bridegroom's coming miss the prize of the Millennial kingdom. There was no after admission for the foolish virgins, The mistake of supposing that the description of the first resurrection saints, in Revelation xx. 4, refers to such a second rapture, will be shown when we come to explain that chapter.

miseries then endured, we find the words, "And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved; but *for the elect's sake* those days shall be shortened."[1] Who are these elect? The watchful and obedient Christians escaped before the final investment by Titus, and these foreshadowed the saints of the first resurrection, who, as we have explained, are to be taken up into safety and glory before the great Tribulation begins. The "elect," therefore, spoken of as those for whose sake the miseries of the siege were shortened, must refer, it would seem, to those who, not having escaped to Pella, were nevertheless elected by God to be saved through and out of the dreadful period of the siege, so that the whole multitude of Jews might not perish. As Alford says, the expression may refer either to "the believing—or those who should believe—or perhaps to the preservation of the chosen race whom God hath not cast off." The application, therefore, of the analogy of that disastrous period to the great Tribulation of the latter days would lead us to infer that after the taking up of the saints there will remain on earth an election, whether "believing, or those who should believe" (to use Alford's words), who will be spared to survive the judgments and destruction of life during that terrible time, and who will live on into the Millennial age.

If this be so, it helps to explain another obscure allusion in Revelation xviii. 4, with regard to the catastrophe on the city of mystic Babylon, or Rome, of which we have already spoken.[2] The words uttered before that event, "Come forth, My people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," whilst they contain a warning against fellowship with the Romish apostasy throughout its career, may also indicate that at the time of that catastrophe, which, as we shall see presently, will be after the pouring out of the Seventh Vial at the close of the great Tribulation, there may be found believers within the pale of Rome, and even in the city itself.[3]

[1] Matt. xxiv. 22. For previous explanation of this prophecy, see p. 74.

[2] See p. 202.

[3] Sometimes 2 Thessalonians i. 6–10 is brought forward as if it proved that the saints will have to pass through the tribulation. But the whole point of that passage is exactly contrary to this conclusion. The Thessalonian converts

On the whole, therefore, we may say that at least those who are faithful servants of the Lord, with their lamps brightly shining, may hope, should the time of the Great Tribulation arrive during their lifetime, to escape that terrible period of distress and anarchy and judgment, by being previously caught up to be "ever with the Lord." We may hope, further, as we have previously remarked, that there will be a great awakening amongst many of those who will be left to pass through that ordeal, so that, though they will have missed the prize of the first resurrection and the Millennial Kingdom, they may, nevertheless, be included amongst the number of the saved, and will stand in their lot at the great day of the general judgment and final resurrection at the end of Christ's reign. Whether or not half-hearted Christians, whose lamps are just alight and nothing more, will be left behind to experience the time of tribulation is a serious question. There is much in Scripture that seems to hint that such will be the case. At all events, in view of our Lord's emphatic warnings to His followers to live the earnest, loving, and watchful life, and of the loss they would otherwise incur, and also of the solemn teaching of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the only prudent course is to seek to be on the safe side.

How long the epoch of the Great Tribulation is to last is not revealed. Some have thought that since thirty years intervened between the two stages of Christ's first coming—between His coming as an infant, and His coming forth as "Messiah the Prince" at the beginning of His public ministry—so an interval

were then in tribulation, while their enemies were triumphing. Paul tells of a time when all this would be reversed. He speaks of the whole epoch of the Lord's coming as a time when the enemies of God would pass through tribulation to be followed by destruction, but for the saints that would be a time *not* of tribulation but of rest. And he refers especially to the crisis at the end of the great Tribulation as a time when the "rest" and glorious condition in which the saints will have *previously* entered at the rapture will be *made manifest* to the world. This *manifestation* forms the subject of the latter half of Revelation xix. which we have previously noticed, and shall presently further consider.

We may add that "when He shall come," in verse 10 of the above passage of Thessalonians, might accurately be rendered "when He shall have come."

See further, on the two stages of Christ's Coming, Appendix D.

of approximate duration may intervene between His coming *for* His saints and His coming *with* them in manifestation to set up His kingdom; and that the Tribulation will last through this period, or a great portion of it. Such a correspondence, however, is quite uncertain. And even if the interval between the two stages be so long as this, the hint conveyed by the "shortening of the days" of the Jewish Tribulation at the siege of Jerusalem, which we have just noticed, would lead us to hope that at least the more intensified portion of the Great Tribulation, the misery and anarchy which will come immediately before the final crisis, will be of much shorter duration, perhaps only a few years, or even very much less.

It has been suggested that the idea of a thirty years' interval between the two stages of Christ's second coming is further supported by the fact of this being one of the mysterious supplementary periods of thirty and forty-five beyond the "time, times, and an half," or 1,260 years, mentioned in the last chapter of Daniel; but the details of these periods are too much shrouded in obscurity to enable us to speak with any degree of certainty on this point. Even if it be possible that the end of the thirty supplementary years (for these days must be explained by the year-day system of interpretation) [1] may coincide with the second stage of Christ's coming; still we do not know that the beginning of them would coincide with the first stage, namely, of His coming *for* His saints, and so mark the beginning of the tribulation era. It would seem that God has purposely introduced an element of uncertainty and mystery into these chronological prophecies, in order to keep believers in an attitude of watchfulness and expectancy. We cannot be certain, for instance, whether the prophetic formula of "the abomination that maketh desolate," mentioned in Daniel xii. 11 as the starting-point of the 1,290 and 1,335 days (*i.e.* years), and presumably of the "time, times, and an half," or 1,260 years, mentioned previously in verse 7, refers mystically to the setting up of the Papal "abomination" in the sanctuary of the professed Church, or, as seems indicated by the context, to the setting up of the Mohammedan "abomination," which was effected when Caliph Omar captured Jerusalem, in

[1] For an explanation of this system see p. 135, etc.

A.D. 637, and proceeded to erect the mosque called after his name upon the sacred site of the Temple, where it still remains the standing token of Moslem domination. Probably the prophecy includes both these "abominations" within its scope.[1] It is certainly remarkable that when Sophronius, the Christian patriarch of Jerusalem, surrendered to Omar, he exclaimed: "Verily this is the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place!" Dating from that event, 1,260 years would lead up to 1897–8. It may be that as 1,260 years from the setting up of the Papal "abomination" by the Emperor Phocas, during the epoch 606–610, reached to the events of 1866–70, which brought about the downfall of the Temporal Power, so 1,260 years from the setting up by Caliph Omar of the Mohammedan "abomination" in 637 (if that be what is intended by the prophecy) which will end in 1897–8, may lead to some marked step in the downfall of the Mohammedan Power which still holds sway at Jerusalem. The "Sick Man" may be taken yet worse, and a further stage may be reached of the lifting of the heavy foot of the Turk, under which the Holy Land may be said to have been more or less trodden down for 1,260 years. Moreover, it is worthy of note that the 1,290 days (*i.e.* years), which is one of the two concluding dates spoken of by Daniel in this chapter, apparently indicating some remarkable crisis, will also have run out, if reckoned from the Papal epoch, 606–610, by the close of the present century. It should be remembered that there is another obvious element of uncertainty in the fact that prophetic periods of years may be measured by the *solar* (that is, ordinary) scale, or by the *lunar* scale, or by the soli-lunar (or *calendar*) scale. We cannot always be certain whether one, or two, or even all three of these, are to be included in the scope of the prophecy. Dr. Grattan Guinness, in the *Approaching End of the Age*, and in *Light for the Last Days*, gives abundant and useful information on these points.[2]

Allowing for all this uncertainty, we may, perhaps, say that the

[1] For brief notice of the mysterious periods of Daniel xii. see page 256, and for explanation of the "abomination of desolation," see p. 56 (note).

[2] For a brief explanation which we have previously given of these different scales of measurement, see p. 136 (note).

epoch of the closing years of this century and the beginning of the next will be watched with deep interest by students of prophetical chronology as a time during which some marked event or events, indicating the approach of the setting up of Christ's Millennial kingdom may not improbably take place; since several of the prophetic periods, measured by one or other of the above scales, run out about this time; while some periods may be calculated as extending still further into the next century, and all may mark steps in the setting up of the Millennial kingdom. Watchfulness is the true general attitude of the prophetical student, as well as of all believers; and at particular times, such as those in which we are living, when tokens seem plainly discernible, special watchfulness and expectation. We ought to be on the look-out for signs of the Lord's coming, chronological signs as well as others. We have Christ's warrant for this. He blamed the Jews of His day for not discerning the signs connected with His First Advent. It was with allusion to the chronological sign of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel that He preached "the time is fulfilled." Both by parable and precept He teaches us to be ever on the look-out for indications of His approach. We may humbly and cautiously anticipate; but we may not positively predict. We have grounds for knowing something *about* the time; but *the* time, the *day*, the *hour*, no man can tell. That an important crisis is drawing on is not merely a forecast by prophetical students, but, we may almost say, an universal expectation. [1]

We now come to the pouring out of the seventh Vial. The Great Tribulation, marking God's wrath against sin and apostasy, will then have nearly run its disastrous course, and will be close upon the final crisis that will put an end to it and introduce the Millennial reign of peace. The pouring out of the seventh Vial foretells tremendous catastrophes that will mark the close of the Great Tribulation and the end of the present dispensation. We shall see that these will include an epoch of revolution and disorder such as has never before been witnessed; also the extinction of the Papal Babylon the Great, accompanied, perhaps, by a

[1] A suggestive little pamphlet bearing upon this point has recently been published, entitled, *Is it an epoch*, 1896-1900? by E.V.B. (Morgan & Scott).

volcanic destruction of that which is its centre and representative, namely, the material city of Rome; and further, the final over throw of the assembled hosts at Armageddon by the miraculous agency of Christ, when, at the second stage of His coming, He descends to this earth in order to set up His own glorious kingdom.

The vision is thus described, Revelation xvi. 17: "And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air: and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne [viewed by St. John in the *heavenly* scene], saying, It is done: [*i.e.* as Alford well puts it, 'the train of the last events is fired'] and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty." There can be no doubt that this terrible earthquake which St. John saw in vision symbolises that tremendous upheaval of the fabric of human society which is to close the present dispensation, forming the climax of the Great Tribulation, and which, as we showed in our explanation of the earlier series of the Seals, was *included* in the meaning of the sixth Seal, as the type includes the anti-type.[1]

Here let us bear in mind the point which we have previously noticed, namely, that great crises in God's moral government of this world have before been marked by great physical convulsions. It was so at the crisis of the Flood, and again at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Similarly both at the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ the tremendous importance of these events was signified by an accompanying earthquake.[2] We know from St. Peter that at the *end* of Christ's Millennial reign there will be such a physical catastrophe as the world has never before witnessed, when "the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."[3] So, therefore, as marking the beginning of His reign, we may well believe that this symbolic earthquake which St. John beheld in vision, at the pouring out of the seventh Vial, signifying the tremendous moral disturbance and upheaval of forces in the

[1] See p. 297.
[2] Matthew xxvii. 51, xxviii. 2. For previous notice, see p. 376.
[3] 2 Peter iii. 10.

world that will take place at that crisis, may also indicate that the same period will be marked by physical convulsions of an extraordinary nature. This is confirmed by the fact that in Zechariah's well-known prophecy, relating to the same crisis, and describing the descent of Christ to this earth to overthrow His enemies and set up His kingdom, a tremendous earthquake in Palestine is foretold; and the same phenomenon is predicted by Ezekiel with reference to the same time.[1]

Bearing in mind this twofold significance of political and physical convulsion, let us proceed with the narrative of the seventh Vial. St. John goes on to relate the effects of the earthquake which he saw: "And the great city was divided into three parts." That "the great city" here means *Rome*, the city of the Papal Antichrist, the centre of Papal Christendom, and that it cannot mean Jerusalem, as some would interpret it, or indeed any other city, has been conclusively shown by Alford and other high authorities.[2] We need not press the meaning of the detail of "three parts," in this passage, beyond its signifying the *greatness* of the political and ecclesiastical convulsion at that crisis, and also, perhaps, the actual effect of an earthquake at Rome. The narrative of the vision proceeds: "and the cities of the nations fell." This indicates that the effects of the judgment of Papal Babylon will be largely felt amongst the other Powers of Christendom, perhaps all over the world. Moreover, if Rome be overthrown by a physical earthquake, it may foreshadow that the same great shock will work destruction in other cities also. We read further: "and Babylon the Great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." St. John, having just previously mentioned "the great city," here more particularly defines it to be the mystic Babylon, which we have shown to be Rome; and he further alludes to the final crisis of destruction with which that great centre of mischief, and cruelty, and corruption of truth, will be visited in *remembrance* of the sum total of its guilt. This final catastrophe, following the earthquake, may possibly be the overwhelming of the site of the city by some volcanic outburst

[1] Zechariah xiv. 4, 10. Ezekiel xxxviii. 19. See further on this, p. 414.

[2] See what has been said on this, p. 112 (note).

such as that of which we have previously spoken in our explanation of Revelation xviii.[1] The description of this final convulsion then proceeds: "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men." This is what St. John saw in vision. It was the vivid symbolic picture of the final great downpour of judgment with which the age will close. We have said that there may be tremendous physical accompaniments at this crisis. Ezekiel foretells a terrible storm of hail, thunder, and lightning, in Palestine.[2] But we need not fall into the Futurist error of literally interpreting this vision, and expect that the earth will be battered by hailstones weighing 100 lbs., any more than we are to suppose that "every island" will "fly away." The description thus concludes: "and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great." The sad fact of the hardening effects that will be produced upon multitudes to the very last, by the outpouring of God's tremendous judgments at the close of this dispensation, a feature which we have seen conspicuous in previous judgments, is here foretold.

Such is the great final storm of the seventh Vial, before which the Powers of the world will go down, at the crisis of the second stage of the coming of the Lord Jesus, when He descends to earth with His saints in order to set up His Millennial kingdom.

Here it may be interesting to place alongside of the description of St. John's vision an anticipation of a coming convulsion which remarkably coincides with St. John's symbolic prophecy. The following is an extract from a letter written by J. A. Froude, late Professor of Modern History at Oxford, shortly before his death:—"What a time we live in! It is like the breaking up of the ice on the Neva—great cracks opening, preliminary to the general split up. Carlyle always used to say that the catastrophe of the constitution was very near. . . . But there will be a fine shaking of the nations when the big central mass bursts up."[3]

[1] See p. 202.

[2] Ezekiel xxxviii. 22.

[3] *Reminiscences of J. A. Froude, Blackwood's Magazine.* January, 1895.

Who can avoid being struck with this remarkable confirmation of the voice of prophecy by the voice of history? The prophet St. John, in a symbolic vision which pointed on to the close of this dispensation, saw "a great earthquake such as was not since there were men upon the earth . . . and the cities of the nations fell": the Professor of history, who has studied the trend of events in politics and social life, already sees signs of the approach of that political and moral earthquake, and tells us that "there will be a fine shaking of the nations when the big central mass bursts up."

Thus we have come in our explanation of the book of Revelation to the actual end of the present age, to the time when the last Vial of the last series of judgments poured out by God upon sin and apostasy during this dispensation will receive its fulfilment.

The visions of the following chapters, xvii., xviii., and xix., contain, according to the frequent method of the Apocalypse, a further and fuller revelation concerning the great final crisis of the seventh Vial.

Chapters xvii. and xviii. take up the subject of the fall of the symbolic Babylon, which had been briefly alluded to in the description of the seventh Vial, and give further details respecting it. As we have already explained these two chapters in connection with the subject of the Antichrist, we need only here refer to that explanation. [1]

Chapter xix. is a vision immediately associated with the fall of Papal Babylon described in chapter xviii. St. John hears a chorus of praise in heaven, because judgment has at last overtaken that corrupt system which has wrought such havoc in the Church of Christ (verses 1, 2). The added statement in verse 3, "And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever," may possibly, as we have suggested in our explanation of the fall of Babylon, indicate that if Rome, the centre and representative of that system, be hereafter destroyed by a volcanic outburst, there may possibly remain an active crater on the same spot during the Millennial age, as a monument of the catastrophe, and to mark where the city once stood, just as Vesuvius now looks down upon the site of the

[1] See p. 197.

buried cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, or as the waste and dreary expanse of the Dead Sea still continues as a memorial of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.[1]

In vivid contrast, the judgment of the Harlot is immediately followed by the marriage of the wife of the Lamb. In the sixth verse St. John says further of the chorus of praise in his vision: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (R.V.).

At this point of the nineteenth chapter we take up the thread relating to the experiences of the elect saints, "the Bride," "the wife of the Lamb," which was broken off at their rapture, towards the close of the sixth Vial, in Revelation xvi. 15, at the first stage of the coming of Christ. This was indicated, as we have seen, by the words, "Behold I come as a thief," after which the period of Tribulation sets in upon earth. We have shown that that coming was *for* His saints: the present passage relates to His coming *with* them, at the close of the Great Tribulation.

Where have they been in the meantime? In the special revelation concerning the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17), which we referred to in our explanation of that part of the sixth Vial, we saw that St. Paul speaks of their being taken up "into the air" to be "ever with the Lord."[2] That revelation leaves them there, and says nothing of whither they are to be transported afterwards. Is there no further hint in Scripture that throws any light on this mysterious question? We think there is. The hint is indeed but a slight one. Still we may reverently and humbly, not dogmatically or with any pretension to positive-

[1] See p. 202. [2] See p. 391.

ness, follow it. In our Lord's touching words, addressed to His beloved disciples, who were sorrowing because He was about to leave them, we read (John xiv. 2, 3, R.V.): "In my Father's house [the great house of God's universe] are many mansions [literally, as in the margin, 'abiding places']; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you [*i.e.*, one of the many 'abiding places' in God's universe of which He had just spoken], I come again [when all is ready and the right time has arrived], and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," exactly agreeing with St. Paul's description that the saints will be caught up into the air to be "*ever with the Lord.*" [1]

We often hear the question discussed by scientists, Are any of the planets of our solar system habitable? Is it not possible that the Lord is now preparing one of them to be a habitable "abiding place" for His elect saints, just as, in former ages of the infinite past, He prepared this earth to be the "abiding place" for mankind? It may be—we say it humbly and reverently, as of what seems only dimly revealed, or rather suggested—that when the saints of the first resurrection are caught up by the Lord into the air, at the time of His coming for them, suddenly "as a thief," at the first stage of His Advent, they will be instantly transported by Him, clothed as they will be in resurrection bodies of wondrous powers, like His own,[2] and therefore probably capable of instantaneous motion quick as thought, to the globe which He has thus prepared for them as a home or "abiding place" during His Millennial reign—the home where He will hold His court, as it were, during that blessed era, and *from* which His saints, under His direction,

[1] For the meaning of "my Father's house" as denoting *God's universe*, compare the words in Stephen's defence: "But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands, as saith the prophet, The heaven is my throne, and the earth the footstool of my feet: What manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord: Or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things" (Acts vii. 47–50, R.V). In God's House at Jerusalem there were many chambers (see 1 Chron. xxviii. 12). This may add further point to the metaphor here employed by our Lord for denoting the universe with its many abiding places.

[2] *Cf.* Philippians iii. 21,

will be employed in carrying out His perfect rule over this earth, in a manner somewhat analogous to that in which the angels of God now carry on their ministry for His children.

If this be so, then we may believe that when the Lord takes up His saints to this prepared "abiding place," at the first stage of His Advent, He will forthwith there hold that judgment of award, the appearing before His *Bema*, or judgment seat, of which St. Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians v. 10, and to which our Lord refers in His parables of the Pounds and of the Talents—a judgment of the elect, who, though saved by "faith," will nevertheless have their position in the kingdom determined by "works," that is, according to the faithfulness of the life which, by His grace, they have lived to Him.

We have already quoted the announcement, Revelation xix. 7: "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad . . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come," and also the benediction which follows: "Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb." We take it that the "marriage supper" signifies that *public manifestation in happiness and glory* of the Bridegroom with His Bride and her companions, the chosen sharers of His throne and kingdom, which will be inaugurated by Christ's descent from above with His saints, as foreshadowed to St. John in the vision that follows, in the latter half of chapter xix. Moreover, the meaning of this "marriage supper" must be extended to the happiness of the whole Millennial reign, and, further, to the blissful condition of the eternal kingdom of God, in accordance with other passages of Scripture where the same wide meaning of the emblem is indicated. The marriage festival in the East often lasted for several days: the marriage supper of the Lamb in its extended meaning will never end. The taking up of the saints, and their appearance before Christ's judgment seat of award, to determine their position in His kingdom, which, as we have already explained, will have taken place previously, must be regarded as a *preliminary* of the banquet itself. The rapture may thus be said to correspond to the joining of the bridegroom's procession by the wise virgins, in the brief picture of the Lord's coming presented by that parable, before

their entrance into the banquet room and taking their appointed places there.

But, at the same time that the marriage "supper of the Lamb" is thus being entered upon, there is also manifested the judgment "supper of God," the scene of destruction, to which the birds or vultures are summoned, as narrated in the next passage of St. John's symbolic vision. That is to say, when Christ descends to set up His kingdom of peace on the earth, He first purges out of it those elements which make peace and happiness impossible, namely, the obstinate and incorrigible enemies of God, and all antagonistic powers. The "many antichrists" or false systems in the world, and especially the great Papal Antichrist, which forms such a prominent object in the Revelation, will then be finally extinguished.

This is what was portrayed to St. John in the vision recorded in the remainder of the nineteenth chapter. Looking up, he sees Christ with His saints descending out of "the heaven opened." This means, if our supposition be correct, that at that crisis the Lord Jesus will descend from the prepared "abiding place," of which we have just spoken, where He will have been sojourning with His elect saints while the Great Tribulation has been taking place on earth. The fall of the mystic Babylon, or Rome, probably marked by the destruction of the material city, at the outpouring of the seventh Vial, seems to have immediately preceded this triumphal procession, in which Christ is attended by saints and angels. St. John says: "And I saw the heaven opened, and behold a white horse [such as Roman generals rode upon in their triumphs], and he that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." Then follows a description of His glorious Person: "Upon his head are many diadems." It is worthy of notice that in the vision of the harvest, in Revelation xiv. 14, which represents Christ coming *for* His saints, He appears "having on His head a golden crown," that is, in His character of King of Heaven.[1] The present vision represents the subsequent event of His coming *with* His saints, *to set up His Kingdom upon this earth.*

[1] See page 394.

Accordingly He is represented in the vision as having upon His head "many diadems," because he comes to rule all the nations as "King of Kings." Those who accompany Him also appear in the vision seated upon white horses, and are called "the armies of heaven," in contradistinction to "the kings of the earth and their armies," which Christ comes to overthrow. It does not, of course, mean that Christ needs the aid of those who thus accompany Him, or that anything like a literal and personal conflict will take place between the heavenly and earthly hosts. Isaiah, in a prophecy which refers to the judgments inflicted by Christ at this crisis, says of Him: "I have trodden the winepress *alone*." His own omnipotent Word is sufficient. Hence, in another passage, which also points on to this time for its fulfilment, Isaiah says: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Similarly St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians of the judgment that Christ will execute upon the Papal Antichrist at the same time: "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth.[1]

These passages show what is the meaning of St. John's description in this symbolical vision: "Out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations," and again, in the last verse of the chapter: "And the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh." Christ, by the word of His mouth, will call into operation whatever means of judgment He pleases. The summons to the vultures to come and feed upon the slain, the very same figure which is employed in Ezekiel xxxix. 17–24 with reference to the same crisis, indicates the immense destruction of life that will then take place. The actual means of destruction called into operation by the "word" of the Lord will be of various kinds. There will be destruction by the implements of war, by sudden pestilence, and perhaps by a supernatural outburst of storm and lightning, together with other destructive agencies. Thus Isaiah says: "By fire will

[1] Isaiah lxiii. 3; xi. 4; 2 Thessalonians ii. 8. The prophecy of Isaiah lxiii. 3 is sometimes misapplied to Christ's suffering on the cross.

the Lord plead, and by his sword, with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many."[1] The same may be gathered from other Scriptures which will be presently mentioned. These prophecies lead us to expect that the destructive judgments will not be confined to Palestine, but will be executed in a greater or less degree over the world, so as to purge away all obstinate sinners, and those who would refuse to be amenable to the peaceful and holy influences of Christ's Millennial reign.[2]

We may gather the same conclusion from our Lord's words upon two occasions, with reference to the judgments that will be poured out in connection with His second coming—once in reply to a question from His disciples touching this very point: "Wheresoever the carcase is, there shall the eagles [*marg.* vultures] be gathered together."[3] As much as to say, wherever sin exists in a malignant, obstinate form, whether in a nation or in an individual, poisoning the moral atmosphere in its neighbourhood, as a putrefying carcase taints the air, and needing to be taken out of the way for the health of the community, there the angels of judgment and death will do their work, that so the world may be purged from such centres of corruption, and enter upon a new era of holiness to the Lord.

In our previous examination of the question of the Antichrist, we have already explained the Historical view of the nature and issue of this concluding crisis of the war of Armageddon, and have contrasted it with the Futurist view. We would therefore refer our readers to those pages for an explanation of the overthrow of the antichristian hosts, which was foreshadowed in the

[1] Isaiah lxvi. 16, R.V.

[2] We may add the following, for instance, from 2 Thessalonians i. 7–10: "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might." This refers to the *beginning* of the sentence of eternal destruction, *i.e.* to the time when they die under the judgments poured out just before the beginning of the Millennium. The *completion* of the sentence will be the consignment to the lake of fire at the end of the Millennium, at the time of the final judgment.

[3] Matthew xxiv. 28; Luke xvii. 37.

symbolic vision recorded by St. John in the latter half of the nineteenth chapter which we are considering.[1]

We need only recapitulate here, in connection with the present vision in the Revelation, a few of the principal points. It is indicated in many passages of the Old Testament, notably in Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., and Zechariah xiv., not as a vision, but in the language of direct prophecy, that at the close of this dispensation, when the Jews have returned to Palestine in considerable numbers in a state of unconversion, and have become settled there, the Holy Land will be invaded from the North by a powerful confederacy of nations hostile to God and His people, and that the Jews will then drain the last dregs of their cup of judgment in undergoing the miseries of invasion, for, as Jeremiah prophesied, "it is even the time of Jacob's trouble."[2] We may conclude that the Northern invaders, in spite of the opposition of a Southern confederacy in which Tarshish, presumably foreshadowing the naval power of England, is represented as holding a prominent position, will at first be successful; but at the critical moment, when Jerusalem has been captured, the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven in visible appearance as the Deliverer of His people, whom He has not cast off for ever. Zechariah prophesies that "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west"; and he goes on to tell of "the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem,"[3] corresponding, as we have said, to the destruction pictured in St. John's vision, and to the description "out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations."

It should be noted that Zechariah's prophecy deals more especially with the miraculous manifestation of the Lord Jesus for the deliverance of His people *at Jerusalem*; but from the description given by Ezekiel of the same crisis, as well as from shorter notices in other prophecies, we learn that the destruction of the invading forces will not be confined to the neighbourhood of

[1] See pp. 206-222. [2] Jeremiah xxx. 7.
[3] Zechariah xiv. 4, 12.

Jerusalem, for the greater part of Palestine will be occupied by the Northern foe, and the overthrow will be proportionately widespread. Thus, for example, we read in Ezekiel of this crisis: "And it shall come to pass in that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up into my nostrils. For in my jealousy and in the fire of My wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him [*i.e.* the Northern foe] unto all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his hordes, and upon the many peoples that are with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. And I will magnify myself and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord." In immediate connection with this there follows in the next chapter a description of the enormous destruction of life that will take place in the Holy Land at that crisis, together with a call from the prophet to birds and beasts of prey to come and feed upon the carcases: "Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood."[1]

The correspondence of this passage with the description of the supper of the birds of prey in Revelation xix., which we have already noticed, when taken together with all the circumstances of the case, shows that Ezekiel and Zechariah prophesied of the same great crisis which forms the subject of St. John's vision, namely, the personal coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to over-

[1] Ezekiel xxxviii. 18–23; xxxix. 17 (R.V.). It should be borne in mind that in the prophecies of Ezekiel there is a remarkable intermixture of the ideal with the real.

throw His enemies and set up His kingdom upon earth. The predictions of these Old Testament prophets with regard to this crisis are given in the language of *direct prophecy*, and deal more with the *political* aspect of events, and their effect on the interests of the Jewish nation. But, by St. John, the prediction is presented in the form of a *symbolic vision* which he beheld, and whilst it refers to the same great event, it portrays it rather in its *spiritual* aspect, and as it will affect the Church of Christ and His interests in the world. Hence the most conspicuous figures on the earthly scene, in St. John's vision of the overthrow of the antichristian forces, are the same three whose persistent injury to the cause of Christ and His Church during the present dispensation had formed such a prominent topic in previous visions, namely, the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet. The presence of the strange figures of the two latter symbolic horned monsters amongst the kings and their armies in St. John's vision, and their doom there recorded, signified, as we have previously explained,[1] that as the two Powers which they represent, namely, the Papal Power and that of the subservient Romish clergy, will have been conspicuous in bringing about that crisis, so, at that same crisis, they will be finally and utterly overthrown. Whilst the doom of the Dragon, or Satan, which St. John also witnessed in vision, namely, his being seized and cast into the "abyss," his proper home, and his being confined there, shows that, as this crisis will constitute the beginning of Christ's Millennial reign on earth, and of His manifestation as the true and rightful universal King, so Satan will then be manifestly deposed from his usurped position as prince of this world; and his malice and power against mankind will be restrained during the Millennial era, until the mysterious episode at its close, which we shall notice briefly in its proper place.

[1] See p. 216.

CHAPTER VIII

PROOF THAT THE COMING OF CHRIST WILL BE BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM.

We now propose to present a little more fully, and at one view, the Scriptural evidence which proves that Christ's second coming will be *pre-millennial*; by which we mean, as we have already indicated, that He will, *at the close of the present dispensation*, after having previously raised His elect, the saints of the first resurrection, come *visibly in Person* to overthrow His enemies and to set up His own manifested kingdom upon earth, and that His reign of a thousand years will then follow; *after* which there will come the general resurrection and the great and final judgment; and then the kingdom of the Son will merge into the eternal kingdom of the Father.

In contradistinction to this, the *post-millennial* view maintains, that Christ will not come till *after* the Millennium, and that when He then comes, the whole process of resurrection and judgment will take place. This view is still exceedingly common, but we trust to be able to prove that it is not the teaching of Scripture. We believe that it is chiefly held by those who have never gone thoroughly into the subject of prophecy, and that it is based upon a misunderstanding of a few texts which at first sight may appear to favour the idea, but which, when more closely examined, and compared with the main evidence of Scripture on the point, will be found to contain no grounds for any such conclusion.

The whole course of prophecy which we have been considering has been shown to lead up to the personal coming of Christ at the *beginning* of His Millennial reign. Scripture gives no hint whatever of any Millennium *before* the Lord comes. On the contrary, it shows that the present age is *not* gradually to improve into a

Millennial condition before the Second Advent. The general characteristic of this dispensation is unbelief and apostasy, increasing towards its close. Not till Christ comes, not till the world has been purged by the outpouring of judgments upon the obstinately rebellious, will the Millennial era of truth and righteousness begin.

In the important primary vision of the Image, in Daniel ii., we have seen that the iron portion of the Image, the Roman world-empire, lasts under varied conditions right up to the time of Christ's coming, when the Stone smites the Image. Then, but not till then, shall His kingdom be set up, and the Stone become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. Similarly, the corresponding vision of the four Beasts, in Daniel vii., shows that the fourth or Roman world-empire lasts in one form or another, *in an apostate condition*, until the "Son of Man" comes to set up His universal imperial rule which the saints are to share with Him. Not till then will the power of the Little Horn, or Papal Antichrist, be finally and utterly extinguished.

Isaiah had indicated the same truth long before. His prophecies contain many pictures of the Millennial era, especially the beautiful description in chapter lxv. 17–25. In the following chapter, *v.* 15, he shows *how* this era of happiness and prosperity in the earth will be introduced, namely, by the coming of the Lord to execute judgment upon the rebellious:—"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." He then shows how, in the blessed era that follows, Jerusalem is to be the sacred metropolis of the earth, and Israel to be once more pre-eminent amongst the nations.

The prophecy in Zechariah xiv. is parallel to this, as Cheyne notes in his commentary on Isaiah, and the Divine intervention there described refers to the same great crisis. This prophecy still more explicitly shows that Christ will come personally *before* the Millennium to pour out judgment on His enemies, and to set up His kingdom. It is there plainly stated that "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east," and that *after* this "the Lord shall be king over all the earth," and an era of security and of holiness

shall follow, with Jerusalem as the metropolis of the King, and the great centre and representative of the worship of God amongst the nations of the world.[1] This era can surely be none other than that of the Millennium.

We would call attention to these Old Testament prophecies, because a modern Professor and commentator, arguing against the truth of the *pre*-millennial coming of Christ, asks us to believe that they refer, not to the Millennial reign of Christ, but to the eternal world. This would mean a period after the time, spoken of by St. Peter, when the elements shall have been dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall have been burnt up, and after the general resurrection and judgment—a view which obviously stands condemned by the very facts of the case as described in these prophecies.

Then, if we turn to the New Testament, we find that our Lord again and again spoke of His personal return in order to set up His kingdom.[2] It was in strict accordance with the Old Testament prophecies, already quoted, that after our Lord's resurrection, and after He had been "speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," His disciples came to Him and asked Him, saying, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They knew that He was coming personally to set up His Kingdom on this earth, with Israel pre-eminent among the nations, and, as they saw Him now personally present in His resurrection body, and endued with Divine power, they wondered if the time was come for the fulfilment of these prophecies. His answer, "It is not for you to know times or seasons," implied that their anticipations were right as to His coming to establish the era of peace and happiness on earth, of which the prophets had spoken, and to restore Israel, but that the *time* had not yet arrived—it was to remain uncertain—there was witnessing and work for them to do, and for that they should receive power.[3]

After Pentecost we find St. Peter referring to the prophecies

[1] Zech. xiv. 4, 9, 16–21. Compare Jer. iii. 15–18.

[2] See, for example, the Parable of the Talents, Matthew xxv. 14, etc.: and that of the Pounds, Luke xix. 11, etc.

[3] Acts i. 3–8.

of Christ's personal return, to establish His reign on earth and restore Israel to favour. It would seem that for a while after their great crime of killing the Prince of Life, the door was still open for Israel *as a nation* to repent, and to receive back their King from heaven; and so St. Peter exhorted them: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets." But we know that the nation refused to listen to such words of warning and exhortation. They persisted in rejecting the Christ, and persecuting His witnesses; and so, as a nation, their doom was sealed.[1]

Again, it was in strict accordance with the Old Testament prophecies on the subject, that St. Paul, writing to the Roman Christians concerning God's dealings with Israel, reminds them that "a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles [*i.e.* the full number of the saved during the present Gentile dispensation] be come in; and so [*i.e.* when that time comes] all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." It is the appearance of Christ, when He comes to deliver the Jews at the crisis of Armageddon, and to set up His Millennial kingdom, that will be the signal for the conversion of the whole nation. Thus Zechariah, who foretells that "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," also says, "and they shall look unto me [Jehovah here identifies Himself with the Messiah] whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." In the 15th verse of the same chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul alludes to the nation of Israel, thus converted by the appearance of Christ when He comes to set up His Kingdom, as destined to be the great means used by God for the spread of the Gospel over the world in the blessed era that will follow:—"For if the casting away of them is the

[1] Acts iii. 19–21. See what has been said on this on page 64.

reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"[1]

Then again, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter xv. 23, in a passage which we have previously explained,[2] St. Paul speaks of the order of resurrection, and shows that the coming of Christ will be *pre*-millennial. He there indicates that the Lord will come personally at the beginning of His reign, and that He will raise the saints of the first resurrection to share in the glory of His kingdom; and also that His reign will last for a certain time, after which it will pass into the eternal kingdom of God. The actual duration of that reign, namely, a thousand years, from which it is called the Millennium, together with the great apostasy at its close, were matters reserved for a later revelation given to St. John, as we shall presently notice.

The well-known passage concerning "the day of the Lord," in 2 Peter iii., has occasioned perplexity to many, and is one on which is largely based the error of supposing that when Christ next comes, the burning up of the earth, and the great day of general judgment, will at once take place. But the perplexity and the error arise from not perceiving that the "day of the Lord" here means an extended time, as does the phrase, "the day of salvation," used elsewhere.

The expression "day of the Lord" is often used by the Old Testament prophets, to denote *a time when God's power is conspicuously displayed*, especially as shown in the destruction of the enemies of His people. In the New Testament it is constantly used with reference to that manifestation of Divine power which will begin with the events that usher in the coming of Christ, and which will last throughout the Millennial reign. The whole of this period constitutes the "day of the Lord." It will be a period during which Christ will be openly manifested as King and Judge over the world. The present age of *mystery* is called "man's day" in 1 Corinthians iv. 3 (see margin), *i.e.* the time in which human judgment is prominent, as opposed to the coming

[1] Rom. xi. 25, 26, 15: R.V. For a fuller explanation of this remarkable passage, and of the meaning of the expression "fulness of the Gentiles," see pages 449-451.

[2] See page 314.

"day of the Lord," the time when the exercise of *His* judgment will be made *manifest*.[1]

This Millennial "day of the Lord" will be marked by conspicuous acts of judgment both at its beginning and at its close. At the beginning He will appear as Judge of "the quick and the dead." Judgment means discernment, separation. When Christ comes into the air for His saints, and "one is taken, and another left," this will constitute a judgment of the "quick" or living; and when at the same moment He calls from the grave the saints of the first resurrection, this will be a judgment of the "dead." Again, at the end of the Millennial day, He will appear as Judge of "the quick and the dead," on the still grander scale of the great Day of Judgment. It is to this whole "day of the Lord" that St. Peter's words allude, though he dwells chiefly on the tremendous catastrophe that will take place at the end of it. It had been given to St. Paul to speak more particularly of the events at the *beginning* of that day, and St. Peter refers his readers to those prophecies. The fiery cataclysm at the *end* of it, was what St. Peter himself was more especially commissioned to reveal. This explains his way of speaking of the "day of the Lord," as that "in which," *i.e.* in the course of which, at its close, "the heavens shall pass away," and "by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved"; while his exhortation, "give diligence that ye may be found in peace," shows, as Alford points out, that he also had in mind the beginning of "the day," the time of Christ's coming, of which St. Paul had prophesied.[2]

The evidence of the Book of Revelation is very explicit on the pre-millennial coming of Christ, and on the events at the beginning and end of His reign, as we have already noticed, and shall explain yet further.

As to the evidence afforded by the early Church, it has been

[1] See what has been said on this, in connection with the angel's announcement, that in the days of the 7th Trumpet the "*mystery* of God" should be finished; page 338.

[2] 2 Peter iii. 10, 12, 14. The above explanation shows how we are to understand the language of the Church of England Prayer-Book, which speaks of Christ as coming "to judge the quick and the dead." The first act of this judgment is at the beginning of His reign, the last act at its close.

shown by Birks, Alford, Elliott, and other high authorities, that the *pre*-millennial view, together with the main points which we have mentioned in connection with Christ's reign, is what was generally held for the first three centuries, though errors on points of detail may be found in the writings of that period. Elliott, after painstaking examination of the writings of the early fathers, gives the following summary of their views. He shows that Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and a little later, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Victorinus, Methodius, Lactantius, etc., explained the first resurrection, that of the saints, *literally*, and as taking place at Christ's personal second coming to set up His kingdom, *after* which Satan was to be hindered from deceiving the nations for a thousand years. The government during this period was to be administered under the agency of the risen saints. All false religion was to be put down. Those of the nations who survived the purging judgment were to be converted, The Jews were to be pre-eminent. At the end of the Millennium, Satan, having been permitted to go forth, would deceive the nations: the final apostasy would be brought on: the rebellious hosts would be overthrown: and then the general resurrection and judgment would take place, and Satan and his servants would be cast into the lake of fire: after which the Millennial reign of the saints would be merged into one of eternal duration.[1]

But misrepresentations of these truths gradually accumulated; and so they fell into disrepute during the dark ages. Yet they were not quite lost sight of. All through these centuries there appeared, from time to time, testimonies borne by more enlightened spirits to *pre*-millennial truth. With the dawn of the Reformation, light was again thrown on prophecy, and the doctrine of the *pre*-millennial coming of Christ, as held by the early Church, was once more brought into prominence by the Reformers. After a time, however, error again strove against truth, and for more than two centuries there have been writers who have sought to establish the doctrine of a Millennium *before* the coming of the Christ, and that when He comes, the general

[1] *Hor. Apoc.*, vol. iv. page 134. Similarly, at page 310, he says: "All primitive expositors except Origen, and the few who rejected the Apocalypse as unapostolical, were *pre-millennarians*."

resurrection and the great day of judgment will at once take place.

In the face of all the Scriptural evidence which we have accumulated (and very much more might have been added, for which there is no room within the limits of the present volume), it may be asked, how is it possible for men of piety and learning, Professors of Divinity and others, to have fallen into such an error as this, and by what arguments can they attempt to support their view?

Several reasons may be suggested :—

(1) The force of educational bias. Speaking generally, we may say that in the Church of England the doctrine of the *pre*-millennial coming of Christ, as we have endeavoured to explain it, is ignored, together with the prophecies referring to it, by all but the Evangelical section. It is also largely set aside amongst Nonconformist Churches, though, of late, the wide influence of earnest preachers and evangelists, such as Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Moody, who have emphatically taught that Christ will come *before* the Millennium, has wonderfully contributed to spread a knowledge of *pre*-millennial truth amongst them, and to deepen their interest in the subject.

(2) A misunderstanding of the prophecy of 2 Peter iii., which we have just endeavoured briefly to explain, and also of the order of resurrection in 1 Corinthians xv. 23, which we have previously noticed.[1] In the latter prophecy these writers ignore the interval between the "coming" of Christ and "the end." They say that the expression "then cometh the end" does not *necessarily* imply a long interval. Of course not, but it *permits* it: and the analogy of the previous "then," after an interval lasting through the whole of this dispensation, *does imply* a similar long interval in this case, as does also the allusion to the *duration* of Christ's reign which immediately follows: and further, what is thus permitted and implied is *definitely fixed* by Revelation xx. 4–6, which names the duration as a thousand years.

(3) A misunderstanding of many brief references to resurrection and judgment in various passages of Scripture, forgetting that these must be interpreted and expanded by the *more special*

[1] See page 314.

and detailed prophecies on the same subject. This error is very commonly made. We have only space to notice a few instances. John v. 28, 29 is continually quoted as if it proved that there is to be only one resurrection, the general resurrection, and that it will take place at Christ's second coming. The words are:— "The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment" (R.V.). In reply to this objection it has been pointed out again and again that the expression "hour" in verse 25, referring to *spiritual* resurrection, obviously includes within its scope the whole of this dispensation, and therefore the "hour" of verse 28, referring to *bodily* resurrection, may similarly be extended in its meaning, so as to include the resurrection at the beginning and at the end of the thousand years of the Millennial reign, as is distinctly foretold in the more explicit and detailed prophecy of Revelation xx. The Lord Jesus simply states the fact of a future resurrection of both righteous and wicked, without going into details; just as St. Paul spoke to Felix of "a resurrection both of the just and unjust." A similar explanation applies to various brief allusions in Scripture to "the day" of judgment, and to resurrection "at the last day." The term *day* in such passages does not, of course, mean a day of twenty-four hours. It denotes an extended period, just as in the expression "the day of salvation." We have already noticed the meaning of "the day of the Lord," and have shown that it signifies a time when the Divine power of Christ will be *made manifest*.[1]

We must judge of the scope of such expressions, therefore, by the association in which they are found, and the nature of the object they refer to. As applied to the Millennial day, they sometimes refer to the beginning, sometimes to the end, sometimes to the whole duration of the period. The context in all cases gives the clue. And the more brief and general expressions must always be interpreted by the more special and detailed prophecies on the subject.

It has been well remarked that to fix your gaze on these

[1] See page 420.

briefer and more general expressions, and to refuse to interpret them in the light of more particularly detailed revelation, is just as if one were to persist in affirming a star to be single because it appears so through an ordinary telescope, and to reject the evidence of a more powerful glass which proves it to be a double star.

This leads us to notice a very serious feature in the method adopted by some opponents of the doctrine of the pre-millennial coming of Christ, which consists in depreciating the character of the Book of Revelation, saying that a doctrine, which is only taught there, "rests upon a foundation altogether different from and inferior to that of all the great doctrines of the Gospel." Thus, with reference to Scriptural arguments such as have been mentioned above, a modern Professor of Divinity writes:—"We have had abundant quotations from Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, but not one word about a coming reign of Christ *limited in duration and followed by revolt.* This greatly simplifies the matter before us. If the doctrine of the pre-millennial advent be true, it is taught only in one chapter [?] of the New Testament. Now all the great doctrines of the Gospel are taught, not by any one of the Sacred Writers, but by a consensus of many. And this consensus proves that the doctrines in question came, not from any one of the followers of Christ, but from Christ Himself. The doctrine affirmed by our opponents is thus placed at once on a lower level of certainty as taught only by the Sacred Writer." [1]

On this we would remark that there is indeed a mass of evidence from Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles relating to the nature of that blessed reign upon this earth which Christ will personally come to establish, a reign in which Israel is to be again pre-eminent, and which will be preceded by the first resurrection, that of the elect Church. Some of this evidence we have brought forward, but much more might be added. The further statement, that there is not one word in the sacred

[1] The above is cited from page 136 of a small volume entitled *The Second Advent: will it be before the Millennium?* and consisting of articles reprinted from the *British Weekly.* It contains the whole question argued out by three selected writers on each side.

writers, other than St. John, about a coming reign of Christ "limited in duration," is distinctly wrong. We have shown that this view of the reign of Christ is abundantly confirmed in the Old Testament prophecies, which speak of the Holy Land restored after His coming, Jerusalem rebuilt, and Israel again pre-eminent among nations in the flesh. Such a description of things obviously implies a period "*limited in duration*," and differing from the eternal state that is to follow. This will be after the general conflagration foretold by St. Peter, by which "the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." In this state, that of the eternal world, the configuration of land will be altered, and there shall be "no more sea," as we are told in the Revelation. As to this doctrine being taught "only in one chapter of the New Testament," meaning Revelation xx., we have shown that it is also taught by St. Paul, in the special revelation given in 1 Corinthians xv., concerning the order of resurrection.[1] Moreover, it is implied in other passages of the New Testament, such as 1 Corinthians vi. 2, 3, Philippians iii. 11, and in the concluding portion of Matthew xxv. (verse 31 to end), as is shown by Alford and Godet. The latter prophecy we shall notice presently. All these passages confirm the direct statement in the Revelation.

As to the detail of the Millennium being "followed by revolt," though it is true that this is only specifically mentioned in Revelation xx., yet, as has often been pointed out, the whole history of man's probation recorded in the Bible would lead us to expect this, since every dispensation has ended in *apostasy*. Indeed, the rejection of the doctrine of the *pre*-millennial coming because this particular detail is not specifically mentioned elsewhere, is a strange method of argument. We might as well be asked to reject the doctrine of the final conflagration, in which the elements are to melt with fervent heat, and the "works" in the earth to be burned up, because it was only given to St. Peter specifically to reveal this point. If God has thought fit to mention some particular detail in only one passage of His Word, who are we that we should say, "I will not believe it: He must

[1] See pages 314, 420.

re-assert it several times before it can commend itself to my acceptance"?

This writer, in his concluding paper, makes a further mistake with reference to "the last trump" mentioned in 1 Corinthians xv. 52. We have already explained that it is called "the last" because, as Alford points out, in accordance with the *pre*-millennial view, it will be sounded at the *end* of the present dispensation, and will, in fact, announce the first stage of the coming of Christ to set up His Millennial kingdom.[1] But this writer says: "A trumpet which, after a lapse of a thousand years, will be followed by another trumpet, loud enough to wake all the dead, cannot be in any sense *the last*." His mistake is that neither in Scripture, nor in the proof of the *pre*-millennial view, is there anything said about "another trumpet" before the general resurrection. We do indeed read of the dead hearing "the voice of the Son of man," and that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise," before the final resurrection and judgment at the end of the Millennium, but nothing is said about a "trumpet" at that final crisis, such as will announce the coming of Christ into the air at the close of the present dispensation.

At the end of his paper the same writer remarks, with reference to the *pre*-millennial arguments, that no attempts have been made to explain some passages which he thinks are in favour of the other view. He says of these passages, "They are passed over in silence. Is it nothing to the point that when Christ comes He will (Matt. xxv. 32) separate the sheep from the goats, and pronounce judgment on both? Are we not plainly taught in Matthew xiii. 30, that good and bad will grow together till the harvest, and then be for ever separated? Yet this important vein of teaching has received from the advocates of the pre-millennial Advent no attention whatever."

We will endeavour to supply the deficiency here complained of, and to notice briefly the passages referred to.

As to the parable of the Tares in Matthew xiii. 30, it is well shown by Alford that it refers to the final great harvest or in-gathering that will take place at "the end of the age" *of mixed results*, of good and bad. A mixture of good and evil will

[1] See page 389.

continue, even in the vastly improved condition of the Millennium; for sin and death are not finally eradicated till after the general resurrection, at the end of the Millennial age. This parable, therefore, is in entire harmony with the *pre*-millennial view.[1]

But here we must notice what we cannot but regard as a weak point in the writings of many who uphold the truth of the *pre*-millennial coming of Christ, and one which lends a handle to the objection made above; and that is the idea that the second or general resurrection is to be *only* of the wicked. Some who put forward this idea point to the typical teaching of the Feast of Tabernacles as supporting it, because the *vintage*, the symbol of judgment on the wicked, is included in that Feast. But in our explanation already given[2] of the typical meaning of the three Hebrew Feasts, we have shown that the Feast of Tabernacles was by no means limited to the vintage of grapes, but that it included in its significance the gathering in of a variety of other fruits; that it was, in fact, the great Harvest Home of the nation, celebrating the completion of the ingathering of *all* fruits. The meaning of that Feast, therefore, "at the end of the year," so far from teaching that the wicked only will be raised, gives us reason to look for a grand harvest, including those saved during the Millennium, at the time of the general resurrection at the end of the dispensations. All the saved who do not attain to the prize of the first resurrection will then be raised; together with all the righteous who may die during the Millennial age. We can scarcely suppose that any of the countless millions of the heathen who have never heard the name of Christ will be selected as His loving Bride at the beginning of the Millennium, to share His reign. But we may well hope, nevertheless, that there may be

[1] It should be noted that the words of this parable are often quoted from the Authorised Version, "So shall it be at the end of this world" or age, and explained as if the reference was to the close of this dispensation. But the Revised Version shows that the word "this" ought to be omitted, and we should read "at the end of the age," meaning, as explained above, the whole age of mixed results, from the time of Adam to the end of the Millennium. That there will be a certain admixture of evil, even during the blessed Millennial age, we shall show later on when we come to consider that interesting period.

[2] See page 311.

those amongst them who will be saved at the final judgment. Such eminent divines and commentators as Isaac Barrow, Bishop Butler, Prof. Birks, Dean Alford, and many others, hold that there are Scriptural grounds, especially in Romans ii., for believing that God will not condemn all heathen alike to everlasting destruction, for want of faith in a Saviour of whom they have never heard; but that, according to His infinite love and justice, He will know how to make salvation through the blood of Christ, which was shed "for the sins of the whole world," available for those of the heathen also upon whom, when judged *according to their light and responsibility*, it may righteously be bestowed.

This view is confirmed by the other passage of which an explanation is demanded by the objector above alluded to, namely, the wonderful but difficult prophecy of Matthew xxv. 31–46. We shall notice this passage more fully when we come to consider the final judgment, in Revelation xx. For the present purpose it is sufficient to say that it has been shown by Alford, Olshausen, Stier, Keil, and other high authorities, that as the two previous parables of this chapter refer to the judgment of *privileged* persons, at the beginning of Christ's reign, viz., of those to whom the Gospel has come; so this last description refers to the judgment of the *unprivileged* ones, or *heathen*, according to the technical meaning of the term employed, namely, "*the nations*"; the question of eternal life turning upon the point of whether or not they have obeyed the voice of God speaking in their hearts: and that the scene refers to the time of the general judgment at the end of Christ's reign, when the book of life will be opened, and those whose names are not found written there will be consigned to "the lake of fire."

Of course, what is thus suggested, on the mysterious question of the possibility of salvation amongst those who have never heard of Christ, must not for a moment be understood as militating against the necessity of missionary effort, and the deep responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel in those dark places of the earth into which its light has never penetrated. The blessings and privileges conferred by the circulation of God's Word, and the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, are so inestimable, from a temporal as well as from a spiritual point of view,

that we are bound by the obligations of our common humanity, and still more by those of Christianity, to seek to extend those blessings to those who have never had an opportunity of sharing them. And, besides all this, there is our Lord's last emphatic command :—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"—a command which none can ignore. On this point, therefore, our duty is clear, and the responsibility resting on every Christian to have a part in this work is great.

From what has now been said, it will be seen that it is a complete mistake to object to the *pre*-millennial view on the ground that it involves the theory that the first resurrection is only of the righteous, and the final resurrection only of the wicked. Indeed, in the published discussion to which we have referred, the distinguished commentator, Prof. Godet, one of the ablest supporters of the *pre*-millennial coming of Christ, distinctly maintains the view that the first resurrection is that of a *portion* of the righteous only, and that the final resurrection, at the end of the Millennium, will be both of righteous and wicked. We shall explain this point more fully later on, when it will be shown to be confirmed by the detailed description of the final judgment-scene in Revelation xx., where "the books" are opened, and only those whose names are not found written in "the book of life" are said to be cast into the lake of fire, implying that others, whose names *will* be found written there, will be of the number of the saved.

But it is often objected that, since the final scene of judgment to which we have referred, in Matthew xxv. 31, is introduced by the words, "But when the Son of Man shall come in his glory," the view presented above would imply that there is a *third* coming of Christ. Well, what we have to do is to adjust our language to Scripture, and not Scripture to our language. It should always be borne in mind that "the second coming" is not an expression applied to our Lord's Advent in God's Word.[1] And if Scripture speaks of a coming at the beginning of Christ's reign, and also of His coming to the general judgment at the end of it, as it does in

[1] In Hebrews ix. 28 it is said that He "shall appear *a* second time, apart from sin" (R.V.); not "*the* second time," as in A.V.

Matthew xxv., we may either include these as two acts of the second coming, or else speak of the last as a third coming. On this point there could not be a more painstaking or learned authority than Dr. Craven, editor of *Lange's Commentary on the Revelation*; and, after an exhaustive examination of all the Scriptures, and of the divergent views upon the subject, he states it as his conclusion that there are three great *official* comings of Christ mentioned in Scripture. These are the *first*, which is past; the *second*, which will be at the beginning of the Millennium, and a *third* official coming for the final judgment, as mentioned in Matthew xxv. 31.[1]

The promise of our Lord, in Luke xiv. 14, "Thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just," is often cited as if it must refer only to the first resurrection, and as if it implied that the second or general resurrection must be of the wicked only. But this is not so. All that is necessarily implied by our Lord's words is, that when the just are raised, whether at the first or at the final resurrection, acts of love, such as that to which He referred, will be taken into account in determining the degree of reward assigned, in accordance with other Scriptures, such as Matthew x. 42, Revelation xxii. 12. And even if we take the words as referring especially to the first resurrection, yet, if it can be shown from other passages that there will also be some of the justified who will rise at the final resurrection, it is obvious that the promise will apply to them also.

Similarly with regard to the passage in Luke xx. 35: "They that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage" —though the form of the expression in the original, "*from* the dead," seems to point primarily to those who rise at the *first* resurrection, "out from amongst the dead," as it is expressed in Philippians; yet the context shows that, as our Lord is there pointing out the difference between the present economy of mankind in the flesh and that which will obtain in the resurrection life, His words, "they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world," must include all who shall enter upon eternal life, whether

[1] *The Revelation*, Lange, p. 340. This is also clearly shown in Alford's *Commentary*.

at the first or at the final resurrection. So again in Daniel xii. 2, there is a brief comprehensive allusion including both resurrections, in the same way as in the passage of John v. 28, 29, which has already been explained.[1]

In all these cases, and in others like them, the principle must be borne in mind that *the briefer and more general allusions are to be interpreted in the light of more special and detailed prophecies.*

The language of the Church of England Prayer-Book, based as it is upon Scripture, must be explained in the same way. Thus, for example, the expression in the Creed, "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead," and that in the collect for the first Sunday in Advent, "In the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and dead," are to be understood in the same sense as those passages of Scripture which we have already explained, and upon which they are founded.[2]

[1] See page 424.

[2] See also page 421, note.

CHAPTER IX

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

We may now, in accordance with the *pre*-millennial view, which, we trust, has been clearly established, conclude our exposition of the book of Revelation by a brief notice of the remaining portion of it.

After the overthrow of the anti-Christian hosts at the end of the war of Armageddon, as described in the latter half of Revelation xix., and the casting of the Beast and the False Prophet into the lake of fire, St. John in vision, as narrated at the beginning of chapter xx., witnessed the confinement of Satan in the "abyss." Gazing from his standpoint of observation, St. John saw, somewhere on the earthly landscape that was spread out beneath him, the mouth of the pit or "abyss," which, as we have before explained, is represented in the Revelation as the locality forming the proper home of Satan and his angels.[1] Into the "abyss" he beheld the monster symbolic form of the Dragon cast, there to be confined during the Millennial reign of Christ. He thus describes the scene:—"And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time" (*vv.* 1–3, R.V.).

[1] It is noteworthy that both the great apostasies, that of the Papacy, and that of Mohammedanism, are symbolically described in the Revelation as having emanated from this source in the first instance. (See pp. 186, 324.) Schemes devised by the great Deceiver are represented as proceeding from his headquarters.

The meaning of this vision seems clearly indicated. Man has been tested during successive dispensations, distinguished by the names of Adam, Noah, Moses, and Christ. In each case an increase of light and privilege has been granted. But in each dispensation the generality of mankind has only fallen away into apostasy. In God's providential arrangement mankind is to have one more trial under still more favourable circumstances. The power of Satan, and of the evil spirits under his control, is to be restrained. The earth is to be placed under righteous government. Man is to be surrounded by a more favourable environment than that in which he now finds himself placed. Yet, even under these circumstances, the inveterate corruption of the human heart will be like a flame not absolutely extinguished, but still smouldering; and when a final period of probation arrives, when Satan, as this passage tells us, shall be "loosed for a little time," the blessed dispensation of the Millennium, like all the previous ones, will end in a great apostasy. The inveterate nature of sin, the malice and power of Satan, and the tendency of mankind to relapse into apostasy, even after a period of exceptional privileges and favourable environment, will then have received ample demonstration; and at length the probation of the race of mankind will be ended, and the time will have arrived when the total results of that probation will be manifested to the intelligences of the universe, and a new order of things for this lost and ruined world, now at last to be brought back to the fold, and restored to perfection, will be entered upon.

As Alford has well pointed out, *all these closing visions of the Revelation represent a regular sequence of great events. There is no inversion of order.* The fall of Babylon, the descent of Christ with His saints, who will have previously been raised, the overthrow of His enemies, the binding of Satan, the inauguration of the Millennial kingdom, the reign itself, the apostasy at the end, the final resurrection and judgment, the entrance upon the eternal state, all follow each other in regular succession. Accordingly, after the vision of the binding of Satan, St. John beholds the enthronement of the saints; in other words, the inauguration of that Millennial reign over this earth which they are to share with Christ.

St. John thus describes his vision, verse 4, etc.: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them." This precisely corresponds to Daniel's vision, when, after the overthrow of "the Little Horn," or Antichrist, he says:— "And judgement was given to the saints of the Most High: and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." It is the epoch alluded to in the sounding of the seventh Trumpet as "the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints," which we have previously explained.[1] It is the inauguration of the Millennial kingdom, which is called an "everlasting" kingdom, because, instead of passing away, like previous world-empires, it will become merged into the eternal kingdom of God, and so will continue in a still more glorified condition throughout "the ages of ages."

St. John goes on to speak of those who especially attracted his attention in this blessed company: "And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand." We have already seen that there are two great companies of the noble army of martyrs noticed in the Revelation, namely, those who fell under Pagan persecution, and those who were afterwards to become the victims of the Papal power. In the symbolical vision of the fifth Seal the former company were being gathered.[2] Their souls were seen in vision "underneath the altar." Their cry was, "How long?" They were told that they must wait till the other company of martyrs should be gathered. The present vision represents the answer to their longings, and the time of their reward. We see the two companies here clearly indicated. The term "beheaded" points at once to the emblem of capital punishment under the Pagan Roman Empire. A bundle, consisting of rods and an *axe*—symbols of scourging and *beheading*—was carried before Roman governors, in token of their power to carry out these punishments. St. Paul, according to tradition, was beheaded, as were multitudes of others. Hence, when St. John says that he saw

[1] See page 338, and compare Dan. vii. 22–27.

[2] See page 290.

"the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God," we can understand that the description refers to the Christian martyrs who fell under *Pagan* persecution, of whom it was said, in Revelation xii. 11, that "they loved not their life even unto death."

No less clear is the reference to the victims of *Papal* persecution in the description that follows, "And such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand." These words evidently point back to the prophecy of the Beast in chapter xiii. In our explanation of that chapter we have shown that it refers to the Papal system as represented by its head, the Pope, and by his supporters, the Roman priesthood. It is there said of the Beast:—"It was given unto him to make war with the saints," and that it was required of all that they should receive "a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead"; and further, that "as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed."[1] We know how terribly this has been fulfilled under the Papal system, and how the saints of God have been martyred by thousands, nay more, by millions, for the testimony of Jesus and the truth of the Gospel; and so it is not difficult to see that the words of St. John indicate that this second company of martyrs was also represented to him in his prophetic vision.

We constantly meet with needless objections and difficulties on this subject arising out of the fact that St. John seems only to make express mention of *martyrs*. As is the case with the whole book of Revelation, so with regard to this passage misunderstanding is often occasioned by neglecting to bear in mind that St. John is not describing actual events in the exact language of history, but only giving a brief record of *visions* which he saw, the meaning of which *we* have to discover. The present vision is that of a ceremony of inauguration, a kind of coronation scene, the subject being the enthronement of the saints of Christ's Millennial reign. And just as in a picture of a coronation ceremony an artist would fill his foreground with portraits of the most distinguished personages, or as a reporter of such a scene would say, "We saw there present such and such persons," mentioning

[1] Revelation xiii. 7, 16, 15.

those of rank and position, so St. John, in the vision of this coronation scene, says that he "saw" the *martyrs* enthroned, not, of course, implying that only these were there, but simply that these were conspicuous in the foreground, and especially engaged his attention. We who live in an age of *comparatively* comfortable Christianity cannot grudge the martyrs a conspicuous position in the Kingdom.

St. John lived in an age of martyrdom, and was himself suffering from persecution, banished to Patmos. We can easily imagine how such a vision must have comforted him and others who, like him, had to endure the bitter hatred of the enemies of Christ. But not only so; we too may take comfort from the vision; we too, if we are faithful followers of our Lord, and, in our degree, endure for His sake, may hope to be present at that scene, and to have a share in His kingdom, since it is written, "If we endure, we shall also reign with him" (R.V.).

We know, as a matter of history, that the early martyrs were strengthened to endure the fierce and cruel Pagan persecutions, by the conviction that the glory of the first resurrection would be the prize of their suffering. But we may gather from the writings of Tertullian, about a hundred years after the apostolic age, and of Methodius, Bishop of Tyre, who suffered martyrdom under the persecution by Diocletian, that it was held in the early Church that the prize of the first resurrection was not only for martyrs, but also for all the "chosen and faithful" servants of Christ.[1]

After the above description of those whom he saw seated upon thrones, and of those whom he particularly noticed amongst them, St. John goes on to speak of the special privilege of those thus raised. He says, in verses 4–6:—"And they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall

[1] We might give quotations from Cyprian, and Hippolytus, to the same effect.

reign with him a thousand years." We have already explained the order of resurrection, and have shown that Scripture teaches that there will be a first, or elective resurrection from the dead, and a second or general resurrection, as is more particularly revealed in the chapter before us.[1] That the first resurrection here spoken of means a literal resurrection of souls that "lived," as St. John says, that is, of souls clothed in resurrection bodies, and who not only were to live, but to reign with Christ for a thousand years, has been proved by the whole course of God's prophetic word which we have followed. We need only add here the clear and logical statement of Alford, in his commentary on the Revelation, which has been often quoted, and has never been successfully controverted. He says of this passage: "I cannot consent to distort its words from their *plain sense*, and *chronological place in the prophecy*, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the Millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for three hundred years, understood them in the plain literal sense. . . . As regards the text itself, *no legitimate treatment* of it will extort what is known as the *spiritual* interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain 'souls lived' at the first, and the rest of the 'dead lived' only at the end of a specified period after that first,—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave,—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to any thing. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain: but *if the second is literal, then so is the first*, which in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain and receive as an article of faith and hope."[2]

Strange to say, there are some historical interpreters, even at the present date, who hold the view, which Alford thought none

[1] Compare what has been said on this subject on pages 314, 391, 423.

[2] The italics are our own. Alford gives in Greek the words between inverted commas.

could be "hardy enough to maintain," that both the resurrections alluded to in this passage, the one at the beginning, the other at the end, of the Millennium, are figurative; and that after the second figurative resurrection, there will follow the final literal resurrection of the dead from their graves, which is described in verses 12, 13. They say that the first resurrection spoken of in verses 5, 6 means "*a revival of principles*, not persons [we quote from a recent exponent of this view], and during this long period [for the thousand years are also taken *figuratively*, as meaning an indefinite time] our world will be ruled by men influenced by the principles and spirit of the martyred saints; but at the close of the Millennium the enemies of Divine government will be once more re-organized for the final effort of evil."

According to this interpretation, when it is said that St. John saw souls which had been raised to life from the dead, what is meant is *a resurrection of good principles from a state of inactivity*, etc.; while the words "the rest of the dead" are interpreted as referring to evil principles that will come into activity at the time of the great apostasy afterwards mentioned; that is, at the close of the Millennium.

Such an interpretation is on the face of it confused, and almost unthinkable. Its error may, we think, be easily shown.

(1) It involves the *post*-millennial view of the coming of Christ, which we have shown to be unscriptural.

(2) It is based upon the mistake that because the greater part of the Revelation is figurative, therefore the whole must be so, whence it is argued that, if we take the resurrection of the Witnesses in chapter xi. as figurative, we are bound consistently to take the resurrection alluded to in verses 5, 6 of the present chapter as figurative also. But the same argument would apply to the final resurrection of verses 12, 13, which our opponents are compelled to admit is literal. Such a style of argument ignores the fact that,—just as in literal descriptions and sayings figures of speech are constantly introduced, and we are expected to use our judgment, in accordance with the circumstances of the case, so as to recognise these figures,—similarly in a symbolic book like the Revelation literal expressions are introduced, in the record of a series of visions which are, on the whole, of a symbolic

character. We must use our judgment, and take into consideration the circumstances of the case. In the present instance, as Alford has pointed out, the obvious relation between the first resurrection of verses 5, 6, and the second resurrection, and second death, of verses 12–14, proves that, as the latter is literal, the former must be literal also.

(3) Again, this mistaken view arises from not bearing in mind the important principle, to which we have previously drawn attention, of the use of individual language in a figurative sense in apocalyptic prophecies. We have shown, that as it was not God's will that the length of this dispensation should be revealed, and the hope of the Church crushed by such a protracted and dreary prospect, systems were spoken of under individual figures, and long periods were veiled by the mystical and symbolic use of such expressions as "days," and "months," and "times."[1] But in prophecies, the fulfilment of which belongs to the Millennial period, when the hope of the Church will have been realized in the coming of the Lord and the blessed era which He will introduce, there is obviously no further need for veiling the duration of time. The present age of *mystery* will have given place to an age of *manifestation*.[2] Hence, as Prof. Birks long ago pointed out, there is no need to regard the thousand years as a symbolical period, still less to put a figurative interpretation upon the first resurrection, when its obvious literal meaning is fixed by its connection with the second or final resurrection.

We must now briefly touch on a few characteristics of the Millennial reign of Christ. The present passage of the Revelation notices only the events at the beginning and end of that period, though mentioning that Satan's power for deceiving mankind will be restrained during the thousand years, and that the world will be under the administration of Christ, exercised through the agency of His risen saints. This silence is only in accord with the frequent characteristic of prophecy, namely, that what is more fully revealed in one passage of Scripture is often omitted, or only briefly noticed, in another.

As to the general character of the Millennium, it is to the

[1] See page 102. [2] See page 338.

Psalms and the Prophets that we must chiefly look. In them, especially in Isaiah, there are frequent references to the state of things that will then prevail. From these we gather that the Millennial age will be a vast improvement upon the present dispensation, although, as has often been pointed out by prophetical writers, as a point to be constantly borne in mind, it will *not* be a perfect state. It will only be the porchway, so to speak, that leads unto the perfect conditions of the eternal kingdom. Sin will be checked, but not eradicated. We learn from Isaiah, and other prophets, that the judgments poured out at the end of this dispensation will purge away from the earth "obstinate sinners," those not amenable to mercy; and so the world will have a fresh start, so to speak; yet still there will be failure. Isaiah speaks of sin as still existing in the Millennium (ch. lxv. 20); and St. John, as we shall see later on, foretells a fearful outbreak at its close.

We may gather from the various notices of the subject in Scripture, especially from the remarkable description in the latter half of Isaiah lxv., which should be compared with Romans viii. 19–22, that not only the spiritual, but also the physical environment of mankind will be wonderfully changed for the better; so much so, that the prophet speaks of that condition as "new heavens and a new earth." This expression must not lead the reader to confuse, as some writers have done, the time thus spoken of by Isaiah with the "new heaven and new earth" of the *eternal* state which St. John describes in Revelation xxi. 1. The Millennial age of which Isaiah prophesied will indeed be "new" compared with what has gone before. It will bring the "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and "the times of restoration of all things," of which St. Peter spoke to the Jews, in the porch of the Temple, after healing the lame man.[1] But it will not be the *perfect* realization of the idea, as the rest of the description shows. Isaiah refers to the Millennial age as a time when the general configuration of the earth will be the same as it is now, and when Jerusalem, still the capital of the Holy Land, will be the chief centre, a "joy" and "rejoicing" to all people. The *perfect* realization of the "new heaven and new earth" will be that of the eternal state, after the general conflagration

[1] Acts iii. 19–21.

described in 2 Peter iii., when the configuration of land and water on the re-constituted earth will be changed, and there will be "no more sea," as St. John expressly mentions.[1]

A prominent idea in Isaiah's description of the Millennial age in his closing chapters, lx.–lxvi., is the position of honour and pre-eminence amongst the nations, which will once more be the privilege of Jerusalem and the people of Israel,—a matter which is also frequently foretold by the other prophets. Thus we read in these chapters of Isaiah:—"The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising"; "Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." "And their seed [*i.e.* God's covenant people] shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." At the close of chapter lxvi. the prophet foretells that Palestine and Jerusalem will be the representative centre, so to speak, of the worship of God that will then prevail over the world in general; and also that somewhere in the neighbourhood there will be visible, in some remarkable way, a lasting memorial of the signal outpouring of God's judgments upon those enemies of Himself and His people, who, as we have already shown, will be gathered in Palestine in hostile array, at the final crisis of Armageddon. Isaiah further states that this memorial scene of their destruction will be visited by those representatives of the various nations, who from time to time will go up to Jerusalem for public worship. This seems to be the meaning of the difficult verses which form the close of Isaiah's prophecy:—"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed [or *rebelled*] against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."[2]

The description in chapter lxv. speaks of the temporal as well

[1] Revelation xxi. 1.

[2] Isaiah lxvi. 23, 24, with which may be compared Ezekiel xxxix. 11–16.

as spiritual prosperity that will prevail during the Millennium. The prophet says of that age in another passage, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."[1] Not only man, but, as we have already mentioned, the whole creation, is to share in the blessedness of that era. St. Paul testifies to this in Romans viii. 19, where he says:—"The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God." This revealing, as we know abundantly from other passages, will take place at the coming of Christ. As might naturally be expected from this improved environment, Isaiah tells us that man's life will be prolonged, and disease and sickness with its accompanying sorrow will be checked.[2]

But perhaps the two features most prominently dwelt upon in the Psalms and in the Prophets, in relation to Christ's Millennial reign, are His *righteous government* of the world, and that which naturally will flow from it, namely, the *cessation of war* amongst the nations. It will be the time when, as foretold by Isaiah and Micah, "he shall judge among the nations, and shall decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."[3]

The past history of the world, and the record of newspapers that tell us what is at present going on in the world, alike proclaim the fact, that what the world longs for is a righteous government

[1] Isaiah xi. 9.

[2] Isaiah lxv. 17-25. The description applies specially to Jerusalem; but a comparison with other prophecies shows that it is to be extended to the whole Millennial world, of which Jerusalem will be the metropolis.

[3] Isaiah ii. 4; Micah iv. 3 (R.V. marginal rendering). It would seem that this peace is also to extend to the lower animals. From the description given both in Isaiah lxv. 25 and xi. 6-9, where we read of the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the lion eating straw like the ox, it seems to be indicated, that as a part of the blessing to be enjoyed by "all creation," of which St. Paul speaks in Romans viii., the present condition of ferocity and warfare, amongst the brute creation, will in some wonderful way be restrained during the Millennium. It is shown by Cheyne and other expositors that the words "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," which occur in both of the above passages of Isaiah, must be understood as applying not merely to Palestine, but, as the context shows, to the earth generally.

and an era of peace. But this cannot be till Christ comes to establish His kingdom. Not till then will all nations be governed by Christian rulers. Not till then will justice be fairly administered between man and man. Not till then will oppression cease. People talk of improved forms of government and civil regulations; but the problems of wealth and destitution, of capital and labour, and of social relations generally, only increase in complexity year by year. It needs a righteous King over all the earth to put us right. People dream of arbitration as a universal remedy for war; but not till the great Arbitrator comes, who, as Isaiah says in the above passage, "shall judge among the nations, and shall decide concerning many peoples,"—not till that day shall men "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks."

Very prominent in the prophecies concerning the Millennial Era, especially in those of the Old Testament, as we have just remarked in speaking of Isaiah lxv., lxvi., is the restoration of the whole nation of Israel to the possession of the Holy Land, and their future pre-eminence and influence upon the world at large. It is an unworthy, illogical, and, we may say, unscriptural, interpretation, which applies the judgments foretold in these prophecies, literally, to the Hebrew nation, and to the Holy Land, while explaining away the blessings in the same prophecies, as referring only to a spiritual Israel; in other words, to the Church of Christ. Such an interpretation, after the increased light that has been thrown on the subject during the last fifty years, can scarcely, we should think, be now held by intelligent and careful students of prophecy. As surely as the *scattering* of Israel away from their land has been literally fulfilled, so will it be with their *gathering*. As one example out of many that might be cited, let us take the remarkable prophecy of the valley of dry bones, in Ezekiel xxxvii., where it is distinctly foretold that the time is coming when both sections of the nation, Judah and Ephraim, shall be again united as "*one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel*"—words that one would think admit of no possibility of misunderstanding. The prophecy runs thus:—"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the

nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. . . . And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever; and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. . . . And the nations shall know that I am the Lord that sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." [1]

Of course such prophecies, though relating to the return of the Hebrew nation, are also capable of a spiritual application to the blessings of the Church, but this in no way interferes with the truth that they will literally be fulfilled. We may say, further, that the fact that their fulfilment has already begun, in the preliminary return of the Jews to Palestine, which has been going on during recent years under our very eyes, is a proof that the whole will surely be accomplished. Indeed, the condition of the Hebrew people at the present time, as throughout their history, is one of the strongest and most patent evidences of the inspiration of God's Holy Word, in which their history and their present condition were foretold centuries, not to say millenaries, beforehand.

[1] Ezek. xxxvii. 21–28. On the meaning of the expression "*for ever*," see p. 493. It has been pointed out by Mr. Goodhart and other prophetical expositors, that when it is said that the Hebrews shall dwell in their land "for ever," we must understand the expression as applying to this world's present organisation and physical configuration, up to the end of the Millenium. After the final conflagration foretold by St. Peter, and the reconstitution of this earth, with "no more sea," as St. John says, from the very nature of the case, we have no reason to expect that the Holy Land as now constituted will remain throughout eternity. These prophecies refer to the earth as it now is, and as it will be to the end of the Millennial age.

We have previously, in our explanation of the sixth Vial, and of "the kings that come from the sunrising," spoken of this partial preliminary return of the Jews to the Holy Land in a state of unconversion, a return which has already begun. We have shown that they will there have to drink the dregs of the cup of judgment at the time of the invasion of the great Northern confederacy; that Christ will appear for their deliverance at the moment of greatest extremity, and that this deliverance will be the signal for the conversion of the whole nation of Israel, and for the establishment of Christ's Millennial reign upon earth. It is absolutely necessary to bear in mind these two stages, in order rightly to understand the question of the restoration of the chosen people to their own land.[1]

In confirmation of what has been said, and also as throwing light upon many points connected with these prophecies, it may be of interest to quote some remarks by Mr. Chamberlain in a work, now out of print, entitled *The National Restoration and Conversion of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.* This writer, who is one of the most able and learned authorities on the subject, draws attention to the remarkable prophecy in Isaiah xi. 10–16, the latter part of which we cited when explaining the "kings that come from the sunrising," in the sixth Vial.

The prophecy in Isaiah runs as follows:—"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse [shown by the earlier part of the chapter to mean Christ], which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. . . . And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his scorching wind shall he shake his hand over the River, and shall smite it into seven streams,

[1] See pages 358–363.

and cause men to march over dryshod. And there shall be an high way for the remnant of his people, which shall remain, from Assyria; like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." (R.V.)

On this prophecy Chamberlain remarks, page 114:—"The 'dispersed of Judah' are known to be mainly towards the west, among 'the islands of the sea,' viz., the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean, and thence into Europe; but it is plain a large gathering is promised by Isaiah from the east [this, as we have shown in our explanation of the sixth Vial, throws light upon the expression, the 'kings that come from the *sunrising*']; and the name Assyria appears to be used here, and elsewhere, with peculiar force . . . it seems not unfair to conclude that Isaiah predicts the recovery of the ten tribes from the neighbourhood of their primary captivity [which Josephus describes as 'beyond the Euphrates']. . . . The same fact is asserted in Isaiah xxvii. 12, 13; Hosea xi. 8–11; and Zechariah x. 6–11; and is indeed become to many an admitted truth. . . . I would also remark that the term 'remnant that shall be left, though doubtless used of the whole restoration, seems to be applied to the ten especially, for of them alone it is repeated at verse 16, 'Remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria;' from which we may infer that at the coming restoration, the descendants of the ten will be a remnant indeed, and few [this is an important point with reference to the present position of 'the lost tribes'], compared with the children of the two. For them, however, especially, there shall be 'a highway from Assyria'; which highway, in connection with Israel's return, is also mentioned, in a parallel and singular passage, by Isaiah (chap. lxii. 10): 'Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way. . . .' The prophecies are the same. This highway cast up; . . . this cleared and levelled way, . . . seems to indicate peculiar facilities, yet to be effected, for Israel's return out of Assyria, in the days when this prophecy shall be fulfilled. . . . But we have seen, in Ezekiel xvi. 61, that Judah is represented as *receiving* her sister Samaria, as though, in some degree, priority in restoration belongs to Judah; and, moreover, this *lifting up of the standard* I take to be simply equivalent to *bringing forth the*

Branch, as Priest and King; which, when treating of the parallel prophecies in Zechariah and Jeremiah, we showed would take place at Jerusalem before a restoration of the two, with people of the *ten* interspersed [this would be a correct description of the Jewish restoration as already brought about—since Chamberlain wrote], and necessarily effect the conversion to Christianity of all who witness it; so that, putting these conclusions together, it seems that the synchronical gathering together of the outcasts of Israel and dispersed of Judah, foretold here by Isaiah, is the attraction of large bodies, both of Judah and Israel, to the glorious ensign on Mount Zion, after a representation of the people . . . has already arrived, and been settled, in the Holy Land, and become possessors of Jerusalem. A partial, but sufficient restoration, having taken place—that restoration which Mr. Bickersteth rightly terms 'political,' and places in gradual process before any conversion [just such a restoration, in fact, as we who are living at the close of the nineteenth century see to be actually going on], Jesus Messiah the Branch, the King and Priest upon His throne, is marvellously epiphanied at Jerusalem, under circumstances which other prophets explain. And, the standard being thus lifted up, the mass of people hasten towards it from all quarters, a willing return of people whose minds had long been prepared [*i.e.* by their national perplexities and distresses], led of the Almighty with 'weeping and supplication' (Jer. xxxi. 9)."

Once more we would remind our readers of the interesting fact that this anticipation, based upon God's prophetic Word, of a partial preliminary restoration of the Jews, in a state of unconversion, was written some fifty years ago, when there was no merely human likelihood of its happening, and no indication of how it could be brought about. We have lived to see the anticipation fulfilled in the most remarkable manner, and thus have had our faith in God's Word confirmed, and have received a marked token that the rest of the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, and the consequent conversion and restoration of the whole nation of Israel, are similarly on their way to fulfilment.

As connected with the restoration of Israel, and also as throw-

ing light upon the moral character of Christ's Millennial reign, we must now draw attention to the remarkable prophecy of St. Paul in Romans xi.

Speaking of the restoration, he says, verse 25: "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." It must be remembered that St. Paul in this chapter is treating of the present or Gentile dispensation, during which Israel *nationally* is superseded, and the Gentiles are privileged. The "fulness" of the Gentiles here means, therefore, the *full number of the saved during the present dispensation*, consisting mostly of Gentiles, but including individual converts from Judaism.[1] When these shall all have "come in" to the kingdom of God, and the number be completed, then Christ will be manifested to set up His kingdom, and Israel will be restored to favour, in accordance with the Old Testament prophecies which we have already quoted. Hence St. Paul goes on to say: "And so [*i.e.* when this time shall arrive] all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." The appearance of Christ at Jerusalem, to deliver His people in the hour of their extremity, as we have shown from Zechariah xiv. and other prophecies, will be the signal for the conversion of the whole nation.

In verse 15 of the same chapter there is this further remarkable prophecy: "If the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

On this we may quote the following from Dr. Handley Moule's recent volume on *Romans* in the *Expositor's Bible*: "The great event of Israel's return to God in Christ, and His to Israel, will be the signal and the means of a vast rise of spiritual life in the Universal Church, and of an unexampled ingathering of regenerate

[1] This is the meaning of the word given by Vaughan, Alford, Grimm's *New Testament Lexicon*, etc.; and in Mr. Wilkinson's interesting volume, *Israel My Glory*. The same idea of "fulness," but with regard to *time*, and not *number*, is expressed by Christ in Luke xxi. 24: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

souls from the world. When Israel, as a Church, fell, the fall worked good for the world merely by driving, as it were, the apostolic preachers out from the Synagogue, to which they so much longed to cling. The Jews did anything but aid the work. Yet even so they were made an occasion for world-wide good. When they are 'received again,' as this Scripture so definitely affirms that they shall be received, the case will be grandly different. As before, they will be 'occasions.' A national and ecclesiastical return of Israel to Christ will of course give occasion over the whole world for a vastly quickened attention to Christianity, and for an appeal for the world's faith in the facts and claims of Christianity, as bold and loud as that of Pentecost. But more than this; Israel will now be not only occasion but agent. The Jews, ubiquitous, cosmopolitan, yet invincibly national, coming back in living loyalty to the Son of David, the Son of God, will be a positive power in evangelisation such as the Church has never yet felt. Whatever the actual facts shall prove to be in the matter of their return to the Land of Promise (and who can watch without deep reflection the nationless land and the landless nation?) no prediction obliges us to think that the Jews will be withdrawn from the wide world by a national resettlement in their land. A nation is not a Dispersion merely because it has individual citizens widely dispersed; if it has a true national centre, it is a people at home, a people with a home. Whether as a central mass in Syria, or as also a presence everywhere in the human world, Israel will thus be ready, once restored to God in Christ, to be a more than natural evangelising power" (*Epistle to the Romans*, Moule, p. 299).

Hence we see that there is reason to believe that restored and converted Israel will be largely instrumental in bringing about that blessed state of things, which is described, in Isaiah xi. 9, as the time when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

We have already quoted from the latter half of that chapter the description of Israel's restoration.[1] The earlier portion of the chapter contains a beautiful picture of the Millennial era, or

[1] See page 446.

Messianic kingdom, which will follow upon that restoration. It describes the righteous rule of the King. It mentions what is foretold in many other prophecies, namely, that in setting up His kingdom Christ will, by judgments poured out, purge the earth of the obstinately wicked, who will not be amenable to His rule:—"He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked"—in exact correspondence with the description in Revelation xix. 15, 21, where we read of the wicked being smitten, at the close of the final war of Armageddon, by "the sword of His mouth." The righteous rule thus established will be firmly maintained, as we learn from other prophecies, which tell how He will "rule the nations with a rod of iron." The result of this righteous and firm government will be a condition of peace and prosperity in the world, of which a beautiful description is given in this passage.

As to the interesting but difficult question of *how* this rule of Christ and His raised saints is to be carried on amongst mankind, Mr. Chamberlain has some remarks well worthy of attention. He takes the "Son of David," frequently mentioned in the prophecies of the Millennial Kingdom, who is also spoken of as "my servant David" and "David their King," and who is to sit upon "the throne of David," as connected with "the spiritual recognised kingship of Christ," and he shows that there will be a succession of princes in the flesh, literal descendants of David, who will reign as Christ's viceroys at Jerusalem. He remarks, that the promise is that God will take of David's seed to be "*rulers* over the seed of Abraham, etc.," where the word for *rulers* is different from that used for *king*, and being, moreover, in the plural number, implies a *succession* of rulers [Jer. xxiii. 26; see also v. 17, "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of Israel"]: also, that in Zechariah's prophecy of the Branch it is hinted that there will be subordinate rulers.

Mr. Chamberlain adds:—"This prediction of subordinate governors *from David's seed* over Israel seems to me to go far to dissipate any notice of a personal, bodily, earthly presence of the Saviour to reign after the inauguration of His kingdom . . . terrestrial government He relinquishes to men, even though there

should be granted some mysterious indication of His presence. (Ezekiel xliii. 1–6)."

We have already touched upon the question of the locality of the home which Christ has gone away to prepare for His saints, according to His words in John xiv. 2, to which He may probably take them when He comes again, and from which He may, through them, exercise His rule over this earth during His Millennial reign.[1]

If the view which we ventured to suggest on this point be the true one, then, wherever the locality may be, we may regard it as the Millennial home of Christ and His saints. It will be the court of the King, so to speak. And as the Empress of India has her court and home in England, whilst the Viceroy acts as her representative in India, so it may be that during Christ's Millennial reign there will always be a human descendant of David's line, according to the word of the prophets, seated upon David's throne at Jerusalem, as Christ's earthly representative and Viceroy, while Christ Himself will chiefly dwell with His saints in the Millennial home.

But since the saints are also to share in His rule, as clearly revealed in many prophecies, we must conceive that in some wonderful way they will be intermediaries between the court above and the earthly kingdom below, supervising and directing Christ's righteous rule over all the earth. In what precise manner this will be carried out is not revealed. It must be remembered that the Millennial age will be a "new" state of things, as we are distinctly told. We know from Scripture that what we call the *supernatural* element will be conspicuously manifested at the beginning and end of that era, and in some degree this may be the characteristic of the whole period. Angels in human form have before now appeared on this earth, and have held communication with mankind. In a similar manner, manifesting themselves occasionally, perhaps frequently, or even constantly, the saints in their glorified resurrection bodies, possessed of marvellous power, capable probably of instantaneous locomotion—powers of which we catch a glimpse in our Lord's post-resurrection appearances—may exercise the Millennial rule of Christ over

[1] See page 407, etc.

this earth. Nay more, since Christ Himself will certainly, according to the prophecies we have considered, be visibly manifested amongst mankind at the inauguration of His kingdom, and again at its close, it is conceivable that there may be occasions, during the intermediate period, when He may also be visibly present on the earthly scene, though of this we have no certain revelation.

On referring to Dr. Guinness' excellent volume, *Light for the Last Days*, we are glad to find that he supports the view which we have given of the reference to the Millennial home in John xiv. 2. By way of confirmation, and as further illustrating the interesting question of the rule of the saints in Christ's kingdom, we may quote the following remarks from him:—"We may banish the notion that this reign over the earth implies such a perpetual presence of the rulers among the ruled as to involve exile from heaven, or exclusion from *the place which the Lord Jesus is gone to prepare for us*. There is no need to imagine that the children of the resurrection will be *confined* to this earth because they are to reign over it, or that they will be limited to any one of the 'many mansions' of the Father's house. They may have a special home of their own, without occupying it all the time. The countless stars of the midnight sky show us how numerous and how glorious those many mansions are. Shall we not visit them all by degrees as well as reigning over this one, and enjoying our own prepared place? Surely the Lord never intended to imply that because He is gone to prepare a special residence for His bride, therefore she was to be to all eternity confined to it alone!

"All difficulties as to the conditions of existence during the Millennium, and during the Eternal Kingdom of God which follows, will be found on reflection to arise from our ignorance merely, and not from any inherent impossibility. Now we know in part only—revelation is only partial. Then we shall know as we are known."[1]

Such then is a brief view of the Millennium as it may be gathered from various notices in Scripture. It will, as we have said, be a great step in advance upon the present state of things.

[1] *Light for the Last Days*, p. 321.

With Satan restrained; with improved physical surroundings; with a righteous rule firmly carried out as by "a rod of iron"—for human nature will still be weak, and will need the assistance rendered by firm control—we may confidently anticipate such an amelioration of man's condition as to deserve the description which St. Peter gave of it to the Jews after Pentecost, namely, a "restoration of all things."

Still we must not forget that there are some shadows in the picture. Sin will exist in fallen human nature, even though the external assaults of Satan and his evil angels shall have been restrained; and sin is always followed by shadow. Nay more, at the close of the Millennium, as a last probation of poor human nature, although the Millennial age will have given ample proof of the happiness that flows from righteousness, yet when Satan is once more allowed to exercise his powers of deception, mankind, we are told, will largely fall into apostasy and rebellion against God, and a dark shadow of sin, like an eclipse, will sweep over the earth. But the eclipse will not be total, and it will not be for long. And when it is all over, and the sunshine of the eternal day shall have burst forth, then sorrow and sighing shall be no more, and the shadows shall for ever flee away.[1]

The remarks made by Prof. Birks on the *Kingdom of the Son*

[1] The idea has been put forward in a somewhat recent book (*After the Thousand Years*, by G. F. Trench), that another and more perfect Millennial period will intervene, "*after* the thousand years" which begin with Christ's Second Coming, and *before* the establishment of the Eternal Kingdom of the Father. This period is contrasted with the thousand years before it, as being a "Solomon-reign of peace," following a "David-reign of war." But such an idea would seem to have arisen from a misunderstanding of the nature of the reign of Christ which is to follow the present dispensation. That reign is to be one of peace and happiness, though its *beginning* and its *close* are marked by acts of war and judgment. Human nature, during the Millennial period, will not indeed be changed: but the conditions of life, in relation to good and evil, will be reversed: good will be the rule, evil the exception. Scripture affords no real evidence for the existence of a period between the Millennium and the Eternal Kingdom. The arguments for such a period are obtained by throwing forward into the Millennium expressions and descriptions which properly belong to the *means* by which the Millennial Kingdom will be introduced: and by throwing back into a time before Eternity begins, descriptions (such as those of Rev. xxi., xxii.) which belong rather to Eternity itself.

of Man are worth quoting. He says:—"The previous history is a dark and gloomy pathway, but here we have the divine temple to which it leads. [We have before remarked that the Millennium is the *porchway* of the Temple.] . . . This [future kingdom] was the great object of the divine counsels, when the heavens and earth were framed in the beginning. With a view to this triumphant close, the course of the world has been sustained, for six thousand years, amidst sin and misery and rebellion. All the perplexed and countless changes of past history have only been preparing the way for this blissful consummation. And hence of all subjects which can occupy the thoughts of an immortal being, this is one of the most wonderful and glorious. . . .

"The time of the kingdom here predicted [*i.e.* in the two visions of Dan. ii. and vii.][1] includes the promised Millennium, and reaches far beyond into the ages that will follow. . . . But the kingdom here announced is not limited to one thousand years: five times, in these two visions, it is declared to be everlasting. It reaches, therefore, far beyond the Millennium itself, and comprehends those countless ages in which the Son of God and His ransomed people shall reign for ever. (Rev. xxii.)

"But here a difficulty may arise. For St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 24)[2] clearly reveals to us a time when 'the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father.' This period the Holy Spirit calls emphatically THE END. How then shall the Son of Man continue to reign, after this end has come?

"To solve this doubt, we must remember the various attributes and titles which meet in our Divine Saviour. He is perfect God and perfect man, in two distinct natures and in one person for ever. As very God of very God, He is one with the Eternal Father; and as man He is one with His redeemed people. But He is also the Mediator between God and a fallen world. In the fulfilment of this office, He veiled for a time His divine glory, and though truly God, '*made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant.*' Therefore He will also hereafter, *as Mediator*, exercise for a season a peculiar dominion,

[1] A brief explanation of these two visions has already been given. See pages 159-173. [2] See this passage explained on page 314.

till all enemies shall be subdued under His feet. The era of *this peculiar sovereignty* will be the Millennium, or the day of future judgment.[1] As God, He will share for ever in the supreme worship and dominion rendered to God the Father. The throne which is surrounded with eternal adoration is the throne 'of God and of the Lamb.' As man, He will also enjoy an everlasting dominion to be shared with His people. But *the peculiar dominion which He holds as Mediator* will cease. When death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed, its purpose will have been completely attained. The God-man will then resign that special dominion which He has held during the time of judgment. Thenceforth, as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, He will share in His Father's glory; and, as the Son of man, He will never cease to exercise visible sovereignty over a ransomed universe." [2]

Briefly to sum up the general character of the Millennium, we may say that there is Scriptural reason to believe, that man's condition, in the Millennial age, will be *the reverse of what it is at present.* Now, sin is the rule: then, we may hope it will be more the exception. Now, heathen darkness and gross error cover the greater part of the world: then, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Now, society is more or less disorganised all over the world, and the problems of land, capital, labour, the distribution of wealth, and social life generally, are ever increasing in perplexity: then, under a righteous and Christian rule, we may hope that all these questions will be equitably adjusted, and the general welfare of mankind be secured. The present age is characterised by the groans of creation, as St. Paul tells us: in that age, there is reason to anticipate that sorrow will be largely replaced by happiness, and that the groans of creation will be changed into songs of peace and contentment.

Let us now notice the mysterious incident of the rebellion which is predicted to take place at the end of the Millennium.

[1] See explanation of "the day of the Lord" on page 420.

[2] T. R. Birks, *The First Two Visions of Daniel*, pages 370–372. The italics are our own.

This final apostasy, Satan's last attempt against Christ, is only mentioned in this passage of the Revelation; but, as we have before remarked, it is in accordance with the analogy of previous dispensations, which all end in apostasy, and in judgments poured out upon the rebellious. We have seen tha according to Scripture, though sin and infirmity will be marvellously lessened during the Millennial era, still they will not be wholly eradicated.[1] Man will still inherit a fallen nature. Accordingly, when, for purposes of probation, Satan is once more allowed to exercise his powers of deception, mankind, in spite of the demonstration afforded during the reign of Christ, that righteousness means happiness, and that disobedience to God means misery and death, will largely fall away into the power of the great enemy.

The record is very brief. As we strain our vision further and further into the far future, portrayed in the apocalyptic picture, we can only discern the faint outline of events. Details are lost in the haze of distance. We read:—"And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (R.V.). By the "four corners" we must understand earth's *extremities*;[2] and since Jerusalem is to be the metropolis of the King, the great centre of worship and of righteous rule during the Millennium, and from which the laws of the kingdom will be, so to speak, officially promulgated over the world, as Isaiah tells us,[3] it would seem that the "extremities" spoken of must refer to the peoples *furthest removed from, and least controlled by*, those good influences, amongst whom, therefore, Satan would be most likely to succeed in exercising his powers of deception.

The reason why they are described under the names of "Gog and Magog" seems to be this. History repeats itself: and as we have seen that, at the close of the present dispensation, there will be a great antichristian attack made against Palestine and Jerusalem, by a confederacy in which, as Ezekiel tells us, Gog

[1] See Isa. lxv. 20. The same may be inferred from other prophecies.
[2] Grimm's *Lexicon*. [3] Isaiah ii. 2, 3. Compare Micah iv. 1, 2.

and Magog will be conspicuous ; so, these names are employed in the present prediction to designate the rebellious confederacy in the more distant future, which will once again come against Jerusalem and the Holy Land, at the close of the Millennium, presenting many general characteristics similar to those of the previous event. Such a use of terms of present signification in order to foretell analogous circumstances, under conditions which have not yet come into existence, is, as we have shown, a not unfrequent feature of prophecy, and one which is exemplified by the use of the name "Tarshish" in the prophecy of Ezekiel referred to.[1]

This, the last war that will ever be waged upon earth, would seem to be a final and desperate attempt, on the part of Satan, to regain the throne of this world. As Jerusalem will, during the Millennium, be the metropolis in which Christ will be specially represented, and the centre of universal Christian rule, it would seem, from the brief record, as if Satan will conceive the daring plan of trying to extinguish the light of the world at its centre and source, and will thus seek, by one bold stroke, to annihilate Christianity and overturn the throne of Christ, that he may establish his own rule in its place.

We gather from the brief account, that under his marvellous power of deception, the spirit of rebellion against Christ's rule will rapidly spread "in the four corners of the earth," that is, as already explained, amongst the nations furthest removed from the centre of Christian government, so that the invading host will be in number "as the sand of the sea" and will go up "over the breadth of the earth." We can hardly imagine, after the long prevalence of peace, during the happy reign of Christ, when the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks . . . neither shall they learn war any more," that God's faithful people will take the retrograde step of making military preparations to meet the invasion, or attempt to fight Satan with his own weapons ; but rather, that they will rely upon the Lord of Hosts for their defence. The very fact of their making no such preparations to withstand their enemies may probably encourage Satan in his enterprise. And just as in

[1] See page 207.

the case of the previous invasion of Gog and Magog, described in Ezekiel, it is mentioned that the invader went up against a people "dwelling securely" in Palestine "to the land of unwalled villages," thinking to make them an easy prey; so the absence of all military organisation and fortification, which will characterise the condition of the Holy Land and Jerusalem during the Millennium, may lead these invading hosts to suppose, that by making a sudden onslaught they may obtain an easy victory, and by thus striking at the heart, so to speak, may extinguish the life of the whole Christian body throughout the world, and thus do what Satan and those who are blinded by him seek to do, namely, to blot out God from His own creation.

If this be the true view of the circumstances of this final invasion, then "the camp of the saints, and the beloved city," which are mentioned, would simply be a figurative way of speaking of those residing at the seat of divine government in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and who therefore would specially represent the authority and rule of Christ in the world. Those thus situated, when they hear of the advance of the rebellious host, not only bearing in mind how the Lord Jesus, their King, by personal manifestion of His power, and "by the sword of His mouth" annihilated the antichristian forces in the war of Armageddon, at the beginning of His reign, but also being in close communication with the King Himself in His Millennial home above, and encouraged by the presence and advice of His glorified saints of the first resurrection, will calmly wait the onset of their foes, sure that at the right moment their King will once more appear for their deliverance. Nor will their hope be disappointed, as the brief record of the invasion and its issue shows. We read:—"And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them."

Then follows the final sentence and irreversible doom of Satan in the lake of fire, of which we have previously spoken.[1]

After this St. John gives a brief picture of the tremendous final crisis of this world's existence under present conditions, and

[1] See page 219.

of the great day, or period, of the general judgment that follows; which will be succeeded by a new order of things, namely, "the new heaven and the new earth" of the eternal state.

St. John says: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." There can be little doubt, that the fleeing away of earth and heaven here spoken of refers to the same great castastrophe which forms the subject of 2 Peter iii., where we are told that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." St. Peter foretells this catastrophe in the language of direct prophecy, St. John in the language of prophetic vision, and both of them show that the event is followed by the new heaven and the new earth of the eternal state. *How* this astounding conflagration is to be brought about is not revealed; but we know that the Maker of the universe can be at no loss for means to bring about what He has foretold in His Word.[1]

When God manifests Himself at a great crisis, *fire* is several times in Scripture spoken of as an accompaniment. In the beautiful description of Psalm xcvii. 1–5, we read:—"The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His adversaries round about. His lightnings lightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." It was so at the giving of the Law. We read in Exodus xix. 18:—"And mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire." It will be so when Christ comes, at the beginning

[1] As regards this point, it may be interesting to mention that occasionally in the heavens a star, that is, a distant sun, has been observed from some unknown cause suddenly to blaze forth with two or three times its usual splendour, and after a longer or shorter period to resume something like its former condition. The late well-known astronomer, Mr. Proctor, has told us, that if such a sudden increase of light and heat were to happen to our sun, the result to the surface of our earth would be very much what St. Peter describes.

of the Millennium, to overthrow His enemies and set up His kingdom. We read in 2 Thessalonians i. 7, that the Lord Jesus will then be revealed from heaven "with the angels of His power in flaming fire" (R.V.) And so at the final great crisis, at the end of the Millennium, the manifestation of Divine glory will again be signalised on a grand scale by the accompaniment of fire, and the earth will be purged by a world-wide conflagration, as is predicted by St. Peter.

The narrative of St. John's vision shows that this conflagration will take place at the time when Christ comes officially, as Judge of all the earth, to conduct the Grand Assize that He will hold at the end of His reign. It is when the Judge takes His seat upon the Great White Throne that St. John in vision beholds that tremendous catastrophe, which He describes as heaven and earth fleeing away from His presence. This is that coming to the final judgment, which our Lord foretells at the conclusion of His prophecy on the Mount of Olives:—"But when the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations" (Matt. xxv. 31, etc.).

At this point it may be well to offer a few words in explanation of that difficult passage. Some explain it as if it were a judgment of the nations found *living* upon earth when Christ comes at the beginning of the Millennium, and in support of this they argue that no mention is made of any resurrection before the judgment. They explain "my brethren" (*v.* 40), as referring to the Jews, and the judgment to be based on the way in which the Jews have been treated by the nations. But if any one will try to realize such a scene—the calling up of England, Russia, America, etc., and the sending them away into eternal life or punishment, according as they have behaved towards the Hebrew nation, he will find such a judgment to be an unthinkable transaction, and, moreover, contrary to the whole tenour of the Gospel message concerning the gift of eternal life.[1] As

[1] Sir Moses Montefiore, not many years ago, said that the Irish nation was the only European nation that could be pronounced free of the guilt of baiting the Jews. So, according to the erroneous interpretation above mentioned, they alone will be addressed, "Come, ye blessed, etc.!"

to no mention being made of any resurrection, the answer is, that neither is there any mention of resurrection in the immediately preceding parable of the Talents, which clearly refers to the time of the resurrection and reward of the saints. In both cases, resurrection is *implied*. In prophecy, especially, what is explained in one passage is often omitted in another.

Others explain it as if it were a judgment of all mankind, including Christians, and as if this universal judgment was to turn upon the question of how man treats his neighbour. But this hypothesis is excluded: (i.) because the profession of ignorance, made by the righteous, that Christ regards kind actions as done to Himself (*vv.* 37–40), could not possibly be made by Christians, acquainted with the Gospel, and with this passage of it; and (ii.) because, in the case of those who have heard the Gospel, to make the question of eternal life to turn upon man's treatment of his neighbour, would be contrary to the whole tenour of the teaching of Christ and His apostles, which shows that the gift of eternal life depends upon turning to the Lord Jesus in simple faith and love, and thankfully receiving from Him the salvation which He freely offers on these gracious terms.

We take it, therefore, that the true explanation is that which is given by such eminent commentators as Alford, Olshausen, Stier, Keil, and others, and which understands that in this mysterious prophecy Christ, in His character as Judge of all the earth, has graciously given to us some hints as to the principles and method on which that universal judgment will be carried out.

Having first shown, in the parables of the Virgins and the Talents, how He will judge those to whom the message of the Gospel has come, He goes on to show, at the close of the prophecy, how He will judge those who have *never heard His voice speaking to them in His Gospel*, and therefore have never had a chance of accepting it. Our Lord's words seem to show that in their case judgment will turn upon whether or not in their lives, as a whole, they have *listened to the voice of God speaking to them through their consciences*, as evidenced by their treatment of their fellow-men, whom Christ graciously designates

as His "brethren," being united to them in the bond of common humanity. An eminent modern preacher has well remarked: "When Christ took upon Him human nature, He bound Himself up in the ties of humanity with all mankind, and linked Himself *in brotherhood* with the whole human race." It is just in this sense that Christ in this judgment scene refers to mankind as "my brethren." Indeed, in speaking to the Jews about His future coming to judge the world, Christ instanced this human fellowship as one of His special qualifications to act as Judge, saying that God had given Him "authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man [*marg.* a son of man]." [1]

St. John, in his first epistle, tells us that Christ's propitiation was not for our sins only, but also for the whole world. God knows on what terms consistently with love and justice that propitiation is available for those in the world who have never heard of His Son, and it may well be, as we have said, that the Lord Jesus, the Judge of the world, indicated in this prophecy, in the manner explained above, something of what His procedure would be in their case. We may not dogmatise with regard to what is only dimly revealed; but this explanation throws light upon many mysteries connected with the question of future judgment.

It also tends to confirm the conclusion to which we have already briefly referred, namely, that this final general resurrection and judgment will not be of the wicked only, as many suppose; but that it will be of those justified, as well as of those condemned—of all, in fact, except the elect saints who will have been previously raised, and judged, at the first resurrection.[2]

That this is so seems perfectly clear from St. John's account of the vision of the judgment-scene which he beheld:—"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened [shown by what follows to mean the

[1] John v. 27.

[2] For a previous notice of this subject, see p. 428, where this passage of Matthew xxv. is further explained. Whatever meaning we attach to the word "nations," it seems clear that the *time* when the sentence there recorded is pronounced is that of the consignment to *Gehenna*, which takes place at the *final* judgment:—"These shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." This passage therefore proves the point in hand, that the final judgment will be of both righteous and wicked.

records of men's lives and actions] : and another book [distinct from the former] was opened, which is the book of life [containing the names of the saved] : and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books [*i.e.* those first mentioned], according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them ; and they were judged every man according to their works. And Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire " (R.V.).[1]

The scene here described seems, on the very face of it, to imply a resurrection and judgment of those who are to be justified, as well as of those who are to be condemned. If none of the saved are to be raised and judged on this occasion, the opening of " the book of life " containing the names of the saved, to see if the names of those raised are to be found there—as implied in the words, "*if any was not found* written in the book of life "—would seem to have no kind of meaning.

We have previously, in speaking of the order of resurrection, noticed this error, as we believe it to be, of supposing that only the wicked will be raised and judged at the final resurrection. But in addition to what has there been said, and the high authorities there adduced, we may add here the testimony of the eminent commentator, Professor Godet, which we would commend to the thoughtful attention of our readers. He says :— "The idea of two resurrections seems to me very clearly brought out by St. Paul in Philippians iii. 11—'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' St. Paul certainly does not mean to speak of the general resurrection to which he is sure to attain, no matter what his life may be ; he means a special

[1] It is necessary to be clear about the distinction between the books here mentioned. " The book of life " is a book of *names* ; the other books are books of *works*. The book of *names* has to do with the *saved* only. It is called in the next chapter " the Lamb's book of life." It is several times alluded to in the Revelation, as containing the names of those who will attain to the eternal life purchased for them by " the blood of the Lamb " : compare Revelation iii. 5, xiii. 8, xvii. 8.

resurrection which is to be the privilege of sanctified believers. He also makes use of the special term, *τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν*, meaning by that the coming forth of the risen saints *from the midst* of the dead who remain dead. We can hardly fail to see a trace of the same distinction in our Lord's words in Luke xx. 35, 'They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection *from* the dead.' . . . This points to an elect number of risen ones who shall come forth from the great multitude of the dead to take part in the happy era which is about to begin, and in which the rest of the dead are not to share." He then shows that Matthew xxv. 31, etc. (as we have already explained it) refers to the final general resurrection and judgment of the wicked, and also of all the righteous who have not previously been raised at the first resurrection, according to the sentence then passed :—"these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life,"—words that exactly harmonise, as we have shown, with St. John's description of the same final judgment-scene. Professor Godet says on Matthew xxv. 31, "Jesus has been speaking of the judgment of His Church in the parables of the virgins and the talents, and He resumes in these words : 'But (or *now*) [indicating a transition to another judgment-scene] when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations.' That is the universal judgment. It seems to be distinguished from that of the Church, described already, and connected with a later coming of Christ as Judge of the world." [1]

That the final resurrection will be of the righteous as well as of the wicked, of those who will rise to eternal life, as well as of those who will rise to eternal condemnation, is further confirmed by the analogy of the Hebrew Feasts, which we explained in a previous portion of this volume. We there showed that the period of the final resurrection is the antitype of the *Feast of Tabernacles*, and as at that feast not only the vintage but the gathering of all the fruits was commemorated, so at the final resurrection and judgment, which is the antitype of that feast, not only will the judgment of the wicked be consummated, but also the ingathering of all the saved.

[1] *The Second Advent* (*British Weekly* reprint), page 83.

There is no space in the present volume to enter upon the Scriptural evidence bearing upon the interesting question, on which Professor Godet touches, namely, who will be selected to be raised from amongst the dead at the first resurrection, to share the Millennial reign, as the Bride of Christ and her companions.[1] We will only repeat here what we observed in our previous brief notice of this point, that in view of our Lord's emphatic warnings and exhortations to be watchful and earnest, given in connection with this very subject, it would be obviously unwise for half-hearted Christians to think themselves secure of attaining to this highest position and privilege amongst those who shall be saved.[2]

St. John mentions, as a further detail in his vision of resurrection and judgment, that "death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them," and that afterwards, "death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." He sees Death and Hades, figured as two personifications, cast into the fiery gulf that was visible somewhere in the landscape which he looked down upon, and thus consigned to their end. We may regard Death as the slayer and custodian of the *bodies*, and Hades as the custodian of the *souls* of the departed. And, as they are both represented as yielding up those in their keeping, we have here indicated the remarkable fact, that the general resurrection will be a rising again of the *bodies* of *all*, who will then be judged, including, as we have seen, both the righteous and the wicked. As regards the resur-

[1] In connection with the point that the Bride, or saints of the first resurrection, will be a special and privileged election from amongst those who will ultimately be saved at the second or final resurrection, it should be noted that out of the number of the apostles there was an election of some who were specially privileged. On three remarkable occasions, the raising of Jairus' daughter, the Transfiguration, and the agony in Gethsemane, Peter, James, and John were chosen from amongst the rest to have the privilege of being specially near their Master and in close attendance on Him: even as it is said of the elect 144,000, in Revelation xiv.: "These . . . follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

[2] See p. 313. It should be noted that in the Old Testament prophets (for example, Isa. liv. 5–8; Hos. ii. 16), there is a lower application of the symbol of the Bride, namely, to the Hebrew nation, as the nation specially chosen by God. But in the New Testament the symbol is used in the higher and more spiritual sense of the Church of the elect.

rection body of the righteous, its glorious character and its marvellous powers, we find many hints in Scripture, especially in the appearances of our Lord to His disciples in *His* resurrection body. We know that Christ's people hereafter will be made like unto Him, and, as St. Paul tells the Philippians, the Lord Jesus "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory." But as to the nature of the resurrection body of the wicked, Scripture gives us no information. That the wicked will be raised *in their bodies* to receive condemnation seems clear, not only from the symbolism of the present passage of the Revelation, but from other Scriptures also. Indeed the word *resurrection* itself implies the rising again of that which falls in death. When St. Paul affirmed before Felix "a resurrection both of the just and unjust," he implied that the latter will rise in their bodies as well as the former. Moreover, the solemn words of our Lord seem to leave no room for doubt upon the subject, where He says: "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (the "Gehenna of fire," corresponding to "the lake of fire," of which St. John speaks) (Matt. x. 28). We may be sure that the resurrection body of the wicked will be something quite different from the glorious resurrection body, bestowed upon the righteous by virtue of their union with Christ. Some have even thought that they will be raised in the old body of the flesh, as Lazarus was; but this introduces difficulties as to room and transportation, and since Scripture is silent on this point we shall do well not to speculate.

Where the scene of the Grand Assize will take place is not revealed. We cannot conceive of it as being upon the earth: for in St. John's vision, when the session on the Great White Throne took place, the earth "fled away"; which means, according to St. Peter's more literal account, that the "works," or things on the surface of this world, during the conflagration that is then to take place, will be burnt up, and the elements melt with fervent heat. If this be so, and if the conflagration be such as we have pictured from God's Word, it seems clear that the innumerable company of those raised at the general resurrection

for judgment, and also those found living at that time on earth, who, it would seem, will then be transformed, must be caught up to some point outside the surface of our globe, to some locality where the Great White Throne will be set. In other words, where the Lord Jesus, surrounded by the glorious throng of angels, and the saints of the first resurrection as His assessors, will appear in state and divine glory as the great Judge of all.

We have, indeed, no distinct revelation of this transportation of raised mankind away from the burning earth to the scene of final judgment; but we may derive some guidance from the analogy of the first resurrection. As in that case the living saints will be transformed, and those in the graves will be raised in their resurrection bodies, and thus together be caught up into the air, according to 1 Thessalonians iv., so at the time of the final resurrection and judgment, when such a tremendous outburst of fiery heat over the surface of our globe is foretold as will make it impossible for mankind to remain there, or for the judgment scene to be carried on under those conditions, it seems reasonable to expect that there will be some similar manifestation, only on a far grander scale, of God's transforming and resurrection power. There are grounds, therefore, for anticipating that at that crisis all who shall be living on the Millennial earth will be changed, and that all the dead will be raised, and, in resurrection bodies, be transported to the scene of final judgment; and that this will take place in some region above, that is somewhere—how far or near we cannot tell—outside the confines of our globe, while the foretold conflagration is going on upon the earth below.

We may not unduly speculate on these subjects; but where hints are given us in Scripture, even though they be but faint, we may reverently, and cautiously, and humbly follow them.

As to the meaning of "the lake of fire," or, as it is elsewhere called in Scripture, "the Gehenna of fire," or simply "Gehenna," we have previously had occasion to say a few explanatory words in connection with the doom of the Beast, and of the False Prophet, and of Satan.[1] When it is said in this passage, "Death

[1] See page 219. *Gehenna*, or the valley of Hinnom, was a place south of Jerusalem, into which the offal of the city, and carcases of criminals and animals were thrown, and where fire was used to consume the corruption

and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire,"— it is not difficult to see that it is a symbolical presentation of the fact that is stated plainly in the fourth verse of the following chapter : " Death shall be no more." And, since Death shall be abolished, it follows that Hades, the place for disembodied spirits between death and judgment, will also be no more; there will be no further occasion for it. The sentence in each case will be *final.*

But " the lake of fire " is also to be the doom of the lost, of those whose names shall not be found written in " the Lamb's book of life." This solemn subject is only briefly noticed in St. John's vision, while, on the contrary, the happy lot of those whose names are found in the book of life forms the main subject of the two following chapters, which close the Revelation.

Since God has thrown a veil of mystery over the doom of the lost, by the use of figurative language, and by not revealing details, we may not rashly attempt to lift that veil, or venture to define accurately what God has left in mystery. That it will be a very sad and awful fate is made sufficiently clear by many passages of Scripture. The manifestation of God's righteous judgment which must fall upon unforgiven sin—that judgment which is alluded to by prophets, apostles, and by our Lord Himself, as " the day of wrath," " the wrath to come," " the wrath of God," " the wrath of the Lamb," the " many stripes " or the " few," " the greater condemnation," or less, according to responsibility,—that of which St. Paul speaks plainly as " indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," and as " eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord,"—and again that which has already been typified in the world by such judgments as the Flood, and the fiery outburst that overwhelmed Sodom and Gomorrah,— all this must denote a very awful doom for the lost. And, indeed, the more our eyes are opened to discern the glorious destiny of those, who through Christ's merit will obtain the gift of eternal life, the more inexpressibly sad seems the fate of those, who will

which might otherwise taint the air. (See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible,* and Grimm's *New Testament Lexicon.*) Hence the term, " Gehenna of fire," or simply " Gehenna," came to be figuratively employed in the New Testament to describe the place of final punishment ; and our Lord further borrows the words of Isaiah lxvi. 24, which we have previously noticed, page 442.

miss that prize for ever. We say *for ever* in its fullest sense. We have previously remarked that the characteristic of the sentence of "Gehenna" or "the Lake of Fire" seems clearly to be that of *finality*. The *effect* of the sentence on the lost, whatever may be the actual *nature* of it (for on this point we are not called upon to pronounce) will be irreversible. The use of the same adjective by our blessed Lord, to denote the eternal consequences of that sentence, as well as to describe, in the parallel clause, the blissful lot of the saved, in the well-known closing words of the great judgment-scene (Matt. xxv. 31–46), seems to leave no reasonable ground for doubt on this point. Indeed we may well believe that it was despair and remorse, on awakening to this fact on the other side of the grave, together with the anticipation of the continuance of the sentence of final judgment, that led to the hopeless misery of the careless worldly man, portrayed in the awful metaphorical terms of the parable of Dives and Lazarus.

The descriptions quoted above, given in plain language, as well as the solemn metaphors employed, are sufficient to warn and deter, if anything will do so. But beyond this we need not go. Rather we may agree with the wise and cautious words of Prebendary Stanley Leathes with regard to speculations on this point. Such questions, he tells us, are "fraught with portentous difficulties, and we may well be thankful that . . . the Scriptures do not demand our decision, that they seem studiously framed to withdraw our contemplation from all such unprofitable speculations, and to fix it rather on the one blessed alternative about which they speak in terms equally distinct and unambiguous, viz., the free and full offer to all those who will accept it, of present salvation and eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."[1]

We have now advanced in the course of our inquiry, following the chart of the Revelation by St. John, to the end of time and the beginning of eternity. We have arrived at the time for the *complete* fulfilment of the prophecy of "a new heaven and a new earth," the time when the parable of the tares will receive its perfected accomplishment. We read in that parable (Matt. xiii. 40–43, R.V.): "As therefore the tares are gathered up and

[1] *Future Probation: A Symposium*, page 24.

burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world [marg., *the consummation of the age*; *i.e.* in Alford's phrase, the end of 'the whole age of mixed results,' including the Millennium]. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire [*i.e.* 'the lake of fire,' of which St. John speaks, at the final judgment]: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"—referring to the time when Christ shall have laid down His mediatorial kingdom at the end of the Millennium, and, as St. Paul says, 'shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father."[1]

[1] 1 Corinthians xv. 24. This handing over of the mediatorial kingdom to the Father has previously been explained on page 455. It should always be borne in mind that the judgments poured out on the wicked living on earth, when Christ comes at the close of the present dispensation, as alluded to in 2 Thessalonians i. 9: "Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints,"—and in other passages that have come before us,—are only the preliminary and imperfect foreshadowing of that destruction of the wicked, which will be completely and finally accomplished in Gehenna, after the final judgment at the end of the Millennium.

CHAPTER X

THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

REVELATION xxi., xxii.

WE now enter upon the closing scenes of this wonderful revelation, in which we catch a glimpse of the eternal kingdom of God.

The vision recorded by St. John in chapter xxi. is a vision of the re-occupation of the purified and glorified earth by the whole body of the redeemed, including the saints of the first resurrection, and all those whose names at the final judgment shall be found written in "the Lamb's book of life."

We have already seen that the Millennial condition of this earth and its inhabitants will be such a vast improvement upon the previous state of things, that it is spoken of by the prophets as "new heavens and a new earth." [1] We have seen, however, that it will not be a *perfect* condition. There will still be something of sin, and sorrow, and death. But in the eternal condition, as revealed to St. John in the beautiful vision of chapter xxi., there will be no more sin, or sorrow, or death, but all things will be reconstituted with a perfect environment. And this, again, will be such a further improvement upon the Millennial condition, that once more it is described as "a new heaven and a new earth," this being the final and completed fulfilment of that prophetic description.

Nothing is revealed, as to the general physical condition of the earth in this its re-constituted and perfect state, beyond what is implied in the above brief description—except the remarkable detail, that the sea (evidently the same sea or ocean which has just before been described as yielding up the dead that were in it) shall be no more. This feature of the vision seems to have specially impressed itself on the mind of St. John. He says:

[1] See page 441.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away [exactly agreeing with St. Peter's description which says 'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise . . . and the earth and the works that are therein (meaning probably the outer crust of the earth, on which the "works" spoken of are situated) shall be burned up']; and *the sea is no more*." Something like four-fifths of the whole surface of the globe, as it now is, and as there is reason to believe it will be during the Millennium, is occupied by a waste expanse of sea. It is here indicated that in the perfected world of the eternal state, as re-constituted after the great conflagration, the arrangement of land and water will be different; and that though doubtless water sufficient for use and beauty will still be a prominent feature, yet the wide expanse of ocean will no longer, as now, cover the greater portion of the earth.

How long a time it will have taken for the countless millions of the dead to be judged, for the purging of the earth by its baptism of fire, and for its re-constitution under perfect conditions, is not revealed. For aught we know it may occupy a very protracted period. But what *is* revealed, in the vision given to St. John, is that when the judgment is over, when the wicked have been consigned to "the lake of fire," and when the new earth is ready to receive its blessed inhabitants for eternity, then will take place the realization of the symbolic scene narrated in Revelation xxi. Then will be fulfilled what is foretold by St. Peter, when, after his description of the great conflagration, he adds:—"But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"—the perfect righteousness of the eternal state, when this world will be occupied by sinless and glorified inhabitants.

Perhaps at this point we ought to notice a question that is sometimes raised as to the possibility of the vast multitude of the saved throughout all ages being accommodated in the space afforded by the surface of our globe, even when the habitable portion has been immensely enlarged by the absence of ocean in the re-constituted world. But, in truth, there are no grounds for raising any difficulty on this question, from the simple fact that to do so would be to go into details on which we can form

no judgment, inasmuch as it has to do with an entirely new state of things, of which we have had no experience. We have no right to assume that this is the only world to be peopled by the saved of mankind. For aught that we know they may be distributed amongst others of the many "abiding places," or habitable worlds, in the great house of God's universe, referred to by Christ, as we have previously pointed out, in the well-known words of John xiv. 2.[1] All that we do know is that this world is to be re-peopled by the saved of mankind after being purged by its fiery baptism, and is to become the scene of God's peculiar favour, and of the manifested glory of Christ as its King.

How, then, was this re-occupation pictured to St. John in prophetic vision? He tells us:—"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."[2]

Jerusalem was already a familiar symbol, or "pattern of things in the heavens," in the time of St. John. The earthly city, the metropolis of God's chosen nation, with its Temple representing the presence of God amongst them, was an apt emblem of God's redeemed people as they shall be manifested hereafter, a glorified community with God in their midst. Hence faithful Abraham is described in Hebrews xi. as looking for "*the city which hath the foundations*, whose builder and maker is God"; and again, in the same chapter, it is said of the witnesses of faith there enumerated that "they desire a *better country*, that is, a *heavenly*: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he hath *prepared for them a city*." Again, in Hebrews xii. 22, it is said of believers: "Ye are come unto [*i.e.*, are brought into connection with, have set before you] Mount Zion, and unto *the*

[1] See page 408.

[2] Rev. xxi. 2–5 (R.V.).

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." The same idea occurs in Christ's message to the Church in Philadelphia, when He says that those who overcome shall bear the title of "*the city of my God, the new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from my God," alluding to the same company of the faithful who are the subject of the vision of St. John that we are considering.

The meaning is made still more clear by the fuller and more detailed vision of the same subject, which, as is often the case in the Revelation, immediately follows in the same chapter: "And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, . . . and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he . . . showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." Here it is evident that the symbol of the city is identified with the symbol of the Bride of Christ, and we know that the Bride in the New Testament stands for the Church of the elect, as, for example, in Ephesians v. 22. When therefore St. John saw this glorious city descending to the new earth, and planted there, he clearly saw in vision the time when, judgment being finished, and the new earth ready to receive its inhabitants, the Lord Jesus with His saints would descend to take possession of it, and dwell there.

Moreover, since a metropolis is the head and representative, so to speak, of the whole country to which it belongs, so the New Jerusalem, which, as we have seen, corresponds, strictly speaking, to the Bride of Christ, includes also within the scope of its meaning the whole mass of the redeemed; and thus the scene, witnessed by St. John in vision, of the glorious city descending on to the new earth, was a prophetic picture of the return of the saved of mankind in general to the purged and renovated world. And moreover, as in the typical Jerusalem the presence of God was represented by the Temple, so in the heavenly antitype, the new Jerusalem or company of the saints, God Himself must be understood as being manifested amongst them in the person of Christ. Hence St. John says: "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof." The type will be superseded by the Antitype.

Here we must draw attention to a point that has often caused confusion. We have seen that in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation Christ was also, as here, represented to St. John in vision as descending to the earth, accompanied by His Bride, the Lamb's wife, arrayed "in fine linen, bright and pure," which is there explained to mean "the righteous acts of the saints." Much misunderstanding has prevailed amongst commentators from confusing these two events, and regarding the descent of the "New Jerusalem," the "Lamb's wife," in the vision of chapter xxi. as being another description of the same event which was related in chapter xix. But besides the inversion of order that would thus be occasioned in a narrative which, as Alford points out, bears every mark of relating a consecutive series of events, a little consideration will show that the circumstances of the two occasions are quite different, and that the whole Millennial reign of Christ intervenes.

The fact is, that just as the act of judgment at the beginning of Christ's reign is a typical event, to be repeated at the end of His reign in the final judgment, so the manifestation of glory and happiness, in the procession of the Lamb's Wife from heaven to earth at the beginning of the Millennium will also be repeated at its close. But in each case not only are the circumstances of type and antitype different, but the second fulfilment is on a far larger and more important scale than the first.

In chapter xix. the Lord Jesus appears as the true *David*, the conquering King, coming to overthrow His enemies. On the other hand, in the descent to earth on the occasion pictured in the vision of chapter xxi., Christ will be manifested in the midst of His people rather as the perfect exemplification of the type of *Solomon*, the Prince of Peace, with all His enemies at last put under His feet. Again, on the former occasion Christ comes as a *Visitor* to this earth, while His home or court during the Millennial reign will be, as we have endeavoured to show, in the place He has gone away to prepare; but on the great occasion which forms the subject of Revelation xxi., He comes to *dwell*, and so the symbol of the *city*, the metropolis of the eternal kingdom, rather than that of the *Bride*, is made prominent in the vision.

We may notice, further, that as the marriage feast is an Eastern emblem of entering upon a new life of happiness, so on both these occasions, in which Christ's people enter upon a new stage of glory and happiness, the marriage figure of a bride arrayed in wedding garments is introduced. Moreover it is interesting to notice that on the former occasion the symbolic meaning of the wedding raiment as denoting *holiness*, "the righteous acts of the saints" (chapter xix. 8, R.V.) is made prominent, while on the latter still greater occasion the meaning chiefly dwelt upon is that of *ornament and splendour*—the glory of the eternal state.

Here once more we may point out the mistake, as we believe it to be, of the ultra-literalism engendered by the Futurist view of apocalyptic prophecy. Some writers and speakers of that school, following out their theory of literal interpretation to its logical conclusions, even apply it in the present case, and tell us that we may expect to see some day a literal city, of the appearance and size described by St. John, descending out of heaven. Thus a writer, from whom we have quoted before, attempts to realise this scene of the future as follows: "John sees it 'coming down out of heaven from God.' It is of celestial origin. It is the direct product of Almighty power and wisdom. . . . The golden city for which the Church of the firstborn is taught to look, as its eternal home, is 1,500 *miles square*, for 12,000 *stadia* make 1,500 miles. John saw it measured, and this was the measure of it, just as wide as it is long, and just as high as it is wide, for the 'length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.' Here would be streets over streets, and stories over stories, up, up, to the height of 1,500 miles, and each street 1,500 miles long. Thus this city is a solid cube, of golden constructions, 1,500 miles every way, . . . a city of gold, whose every street is one fifth the length of the diameter of the earth, and the number of whose main avenues, though a mile above each other, and a mile apart, would not be less than eight millions! . . . Earth has no foundations on which such a city could be set, to say nothing of the materials of which it is built;

therefore it comes forth out of the heaven from God, and has its place above the tops of the mountains."[1]

Probably most of our readers will agree that such attempts to realise St. John's vision, and to interpret it as a literal description of what will take place in the future, are equally inconceivable and unnecessary. We take it that this vision, like the previous visions of the book which we have considered, is a *prophetical symbolic picture*, the meaning of which we have to discover.

We cannot indeed be certain in this instance what it was exactly that St. John saw. Some commentators think that the New Jerusalem presented the appearance in his vision of a gigantic cube, as described in the extract given above; others that the 12,000 furlongs is not the measure of each of the sides, but of all the sides together, and that the city thus formed what would be still a monstrous cube of nearly 400 miles in length, and breadth, and height. Another view, to which Alford inclines, is that the city seen by St. John in vision was, like its type the earthly Jerusalem, situated on a hill, and that this hill was included in the measurement. The fact of this uncertainty, and the impossibility of conceiving the idea of a cubical city, go to show that the whole vision is symbolical of events in the future, with regard to which we can catch only the general meaning, whilst for full knowledge and realisation we must be content to wait till the time comes.

As to the position of the New Jerusalem with regard to the re-constituted earth, some have thought that, though St. John is said to have seen it descending to the earth, it did not actually come to the earth, but remained suspended at a certain distance above it, "high over Palestine, and perhaps stationary, as the earth revolves under it." Such an idea, however, seems to be unwarranted by the description. Rather we would say that the whole inference from the narrative of the vision is that the city descended to the earth. For instance, we read: "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. . . . And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them" (vers. 2, 3, R.V.). Alford rightly says of these last

[1] Seiss on the *Revelation*, pages 649, 652, 653.

two chapters, "the whole of the things described . . . are subsequent to the general judgment, and descriptive of the consummation of the triumph and bliss of Christ's people with Him in the eternal kingdom of God. This eternal kingdom is situated on the purified and renewed earth, become the blessed habitation of God with His glorified people."

We have already shown that the main symbol, namely, that of a *city*, is an emblem of associated and ordered life, and so the descent of the New Jerusalem to the earth which St. John witnessed, symbolically foretold the re-occupation of this earth by the innumerable multitudes of the redeemed after the final judgment and the purging of the world by fire, there to enjoy together the happiness of the eternal state. Doubtless the saints of the first resurrection are those specially signified by the New Jerusalem; but, as we have before remarked, the redeemed of mankind generally may be regarded as also included within the scope of the meaning of the symbol, just as the earthly Jerusalem might be considered in a certain sense as representing the Holy Land of which it is the metropolis.[1]

But, although the city which St. John saw descending out of heaven was thus a symbolic representation of the re-occupation of this earth by the redeemed, yet we may well believe that there will be something analogous to the *city* in the future world. Whilst guarding against the extravagance involved in the ultra-literal interpretation, we must not fall into the opposite error of supposing that there will be nothing material in the environment of mankind in the eternal kingdom. The eminent Dr. Chalmers, in one of his discourses, has some remarks on this which deserve attention. He says: "There is much of the innocent, and much of the inspiring, and much to affect and elevate the heart, in the scenes and contemplation of materiality, and we do hail the information that, after the loosening of the present framework [of our world], it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure, and of its unbounded variety;

[1] In the same way *Babylon* in the Old Testament is often spoken of in a sense that includes within its scope the whole country and power of the Babylonian Empire.

that, in addition to our direct personal view of the Deity, when He comes down to tabernacle with men, we shall also have the reflection of Him in a lovely mirror of His own workmanship; and that, instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension, we shall walk for ever in a land replenished with those sensible delights, and with those sensible glories, which we doubt not will lie most profusely scattered over the 'new heavens and the new earth.' We are now walking on a terrestrial surface not more compact, perhaps, than the one we shall hereafter walk upon; and are now wearing terrestrial bodies not firmer and more solid, perhaps, than those we shall hereafter wear. . . . The spirituality of our future state lies not in the kind of substance which is to compose its framework, but in the character of those who people it. There will be a firm earth as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it as we have at present; and it is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterised."

We may imagine, therefore, that there will be some central spot on the renewed earth which will be the place where the glory of the Bride, or saints of the first resurrection, and the presence of the King Himself, will be especially manifested. We may further, perhaps, suppose that this place will be the centre from which not only spiritual, but also physical, light may be diffused over the world. We read in chapter xxi. 23: "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb." From this we may, perhaps, gather that, just as in the Old Testament times the Shekinah glory in the Most Holy Place was at once the token of God's presence there, and also the actual light which illumined it, so, in the future abode of the saints on the purged and glorified earth, it may be that a manifestation of the Shekinah glory will take place on a scale of grandeur never before witnessed, and that it will not only be the symbol of God's presence, but also will be a source of illumination to the earth. We may imagine that it will shine with special glory at that particular spot of the redeemed earth, which, like the Jerusalem of the previous dispensation, will be the chief centre

of manifestation—the court, so to speak, of the King. But also we may perhaps conclude that this Shekinah glory will, in a measure, envelop the whole earth so that it may truly be said that "the nations will walk amidst the light thereof" (R.V.).

If this be so, then the beautiful description of the future bliss of the redeemed in the seventh chapter of the Revelation (which, as we have previously explained, and as may be seen by a comparison of that passage with this one,[1] refers to the same time and the same persons, namely, the general company of the saved after the final judgment), throws light on the present passage, and also receives illustration from it. We there read: "Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in His temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." The *temple* here spoken of must be taken in an extended meaning as referring to the whole earth, peopled by God's servants, ever ministering to Him in happy service and worship; and the "spreading of his tabernacle over them" may not only mean that they shall share His glory and protection, but may also refer to an actual manifestation of the Shekinah glory over the whole earth.

Lange has an excellent comment on the above words. He says: "It is a thought of unique grandeur, that the glory or Shekinah of God, once veiled by the pillar of cloud and fire, and, outside of distinct prophetic manifestations, regularly revealed only in a figurative form to the High Priest in the Holy of Holies (of the Tabernacle), is now, in a permanent and apparent glory, to sink down from the Throne upon the blessed and spread itself out over them." Alford, too, has well said of these words that they give the fact of God dwelling among His redeemed, united with the fact of His protection being *over* them. Both commentators refer to the remarkable passage in Isaiah iv. 5: "And the Lord will create over the whole habitation of mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for over all the glory shall be spread a canopy" (R.V.). From these words it would appear that even in the Millennial kingdom there will be a manifestation

[1] See page 307, and compare Revelation vii. 14–17 with xxii. 14 and xxi. 3, 4.

of the Shekinah glory over Jerusalem; and it will only be in accordance with that law of progression and development which characterises God's works and dispensational purposes, if the final manifestation of the Shekinah glory in the eternal kingdom be such as not only to shine forth with special brilliancy over the place when Christ and His saints will be chiefly manifested, but also to illumine the world at large.

If this be so, what is said of the New Jerusalem, namely, that "there shall be night no more," must be understood as applying, in its degree, to the whole earth; and to mean that the supernatural splendour thus diffused will do away with the alternation of night and darkness which is now experienced. We have no reason to believe that the glorious resurrection body will feel fatigue, or that there will be any need of darkness and sleep for the recuperation of its energies, as is now the case. Hence, when it is said, in the passage above quoted from chapter vii., that they "shall serve him day and night," it may be, as commentators tell us, simply another way of expressing *continuous* service. And so, again, in chapter xxi. 25, where it is said, "the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day," the words immediately following, "for there shall be no night there," show that it is meant that the gates shall remain *continually* open.

In the further details of the appearance of the New Jerusalem in its eternal condition, as it was seen by St. John in vision, a variety of emblems and figurative descriptions denoting perfection and beauty enter into the picture. It must needs be so. We can form no accurate idea of the details of life as it will be on this globe in its new and glorified condition, peopled by countless millions of happy beings in the spiritual bodies of the resurrection state. No ordinary language could be used to describe it. The vision vouchsafed to St. John can give us some idea, but only a very dim and imperfect one, of the glory and happiness of the future world.

As to the measurement of the city, what is this but a symbol to convey some idea of the *perfection* and *grandeur* of the future home? As Lange says: "This magnitude is exhibited throughout in forms of perfection. The City has the form of a perfect

cube, like the Holy of Holies, and appears in this equality of measurement as an expression of the perfect heavenly world." The wall of jasper, the gates each "of one pearl," the foundations "adorned with all manner of precious stones" of enormous size, the "street of the city pure gold, as it were transparent glass," are so many symbolic descriptions to foretell what a magnificence and rich beauty will characterize the future abode, infinitely transcending all human experience and imagination. From the very fact of its having to do with the environment of spiritual bodies, we in our natural bodies are not in a position to judge how much of the vision is purely symbolical, or how much of materiality may underlie the figurative description. The glory is dazzling, and the outlines are faint, but enough is revealed to quicken our hope and strengthen our faith.

There is a brief allusion, which seems to indicate that the presence and companionship and service of *angels* will not be absent from the organisation of God's eternal kingdom upon this earth. At the twelve gates of the city, through which go in and out those whose names are written in "the Lamb's Book of Life," St. John saw twelve angels presiding.

Moreover, as Christ promised that His twelve apostles, who shared the danger and the difficulty of establishing His Church of the present dispensation, should, when He came to establish His Millennial kingdom, "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," those apostles will continue to have a position of special dignity in the eternal kingdom, as we may gather from the further detail of St. John's vision: "The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."[1]

In the closing chapter of the Revelation we catch our last glimpse of the eternal kingdom. It is a vision of Paradise. It has often been pointed out, both by early and by modern writers, that as the Bible opens with a description of Paradise lost, so it closes with a picture of Paradise regained. But infinitely more will be gained than was ever lost. As Lange well remarks:

[1] Rev. xxi. 14; Luke xxii. 28–30. "One throne, that of Judas, another took, Acts i. 20" (Alford).

"The new universal Paradise has bloomed from the seed of the first Paradise, buried in the soil of the world's history." Indeed the first Paradise was but a feeble picture of the last. It was only a germ, scarcely to be compared with the full-grown plant. That germ was nipped in its earliest existence by sin, but is destined, nevertheless, by the almighty transforming power of Him who brings good out of evil, to develop eventually into a blossom of transcendent beauty, far exceeding all that could have been anticipated from its first beginning.

In this Paradise of the future we have a striking example of that law which characterises God's works, both in the moral and material world, namely, *a repetition of type progressing towards perfection.* Sir J. W. Dawson, in his interesting volume, *Modern Science in Bible Lands*, speaking of progressive development as exhibited in the successive forms of life in the animal kingdoms, describes man as "the highest realisation of a plan previously sketched by the Creator in many rude and humble forms." Just so the plan of the eternal Paradise was roughly sketched, so to speak, in the Garden of Eden. It appears again, on a far grander scale, in the prophecies of the Millennial age. And it is finally seen, in all the glory of its perfect form, in the last vision of the Revelation.

The personal presence of the Deity is manifested in all three, but in an ever increasing and more glorious degree. In the account of the first Paradise in Genesis iii. we read of "the Lord God [by which we must understand God manifested in the Son, the Angel Jehovah] walking in the garden in the cool of the day." In the Millennial Paradise described by the Prophets we have seen that the Lord Jesus will *visit* this renovated earth, under circumstances of further developed manifestation of Divine power and majesty, while there will probably be an appearance of the Shekinah glory hanging over Jerusalem. In the Paradise of the eternal kingdom He will not merely *visit* this earth in its perfected condition, but will *dwell* here: and the glory of the Shekinah will probably not merely appear at the New Jerusalem, but will envelop the whole globe.

Again, of the first Paradise we read, in Genesis ii. 10, that "a river went out of Eden to water the garden." In the Paradisaical

state of the Millennial earth, described in Ezekiel xlvii., a river, in a different locality, from a higher source, and producing grander results full of spiritual import, is spoken of. The stream there flows from beneath the Temple, and it carries healing and life wherever it goes, making sweet and fresh the waters of the Dead Sea. But in the perfect Paradise of the Revelation, the river of life is described as "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." In the Paradise of Genesis there was *one* tree of life . . . in the midst of the garden." In the Paradisaical scene of the Millennium described in Ezekiel's vision we read of "*very many*" trees on the banks of the river, "whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing."[1] In the Paradise described in the Revelation we have the same features exhibited upon a yet grander scale. In language closely resembling that of Ezekiel St. John says: "And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit [so *marg.*], yielding its fruit every month." In this description, as the best commentators have well pointed out, we must take the words "the tree of life" in the generic sense, as indicating the *class* of trees. St. John saw a wide open space, or broadway, extending through the city of the New Jerusalem, and in the middle of this space the river flowed "bright as crystal," while on each of its banks there grew, as Lange expresses it, an endless avenue of the trees of life. The bearing of twelve crops, one for each month, indicates a never-failing supply of fruit. In the words that follow, "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations," it is evident that we must understand the expression *healing* as meaning *preserving in health*; for there will be, in that day, nothing to be healed, in the ordinary sense of the word.[2]

[1] Ezek. xlvii. 12.

[2] In Cremer's Lexicon and other critical authorities it is shown that the root of the Greek word for "healing" means "*service*," and from the idea of rendering service in case of sickness came the derivative meaning of *healing*. Here clearly we must take the word in its original sense as denoting *service* in the way of *preserving* in health, and not in its secondary sense of *restoring* to health, for the reason mentioned above.

The symbolical meaning of all this, which is what is most important for us to know, is not difficult to find. God Himself, manifested in Christ Jesus, will, through the agency of the Holy Spirit (symbolised by the "river"), be the constant source of life, and happiness, and well-being, to "all the nations," all the blessed inhabitants of the eternal world, throughout the countless ages of the future.

As to what is ideal, and what is real, in these descriptions, it has been truly remarked by Van Oosterzee and others, that it is difficult in these far-reaching prophecies, dealing, as they do with conditions and circumstances never hitherto experienced, to draw the line exactly between what is to be interpreted as spiritual and symbolical, and what as real and actual in the literal sense of ordinary language.[1] It is quite possible, if not probable, judging from the present state of things, that in some cases both meanings may be included. The perishing of the seed corn, the bursting forth of spring after the death of winter, the transformation of the chrysalis into the butterfly, and many other features of nature, are things actually visible and literally existing, but at the same time full of deep spiritual meaning. May it not be so in the future world? May not the glorified and perfected earth of the eternal ages exhibit in its physical features correspondences and illustrations of spiritual realities, in the same way that nature in its fallen and imperfect state does now? And if Jerusalem during the Millennium, and still more the New Jerusalem of the eternal kingdom, are to be centres from which spiritual light and life are to emanate, as we know from God's Word will be the case, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there may be something in the physical aspect of those centres which will illustrate their character in this respect.[2]

An important point to be noticed in St. John's vision of the eternal kingdom on the earth is this, namely, that as in the

[1] The intermingling of the ideal with the real is a marked characteristic of some of Ezekiel's visions.

[2] Compare, for instance, Isaiah ii. 3, 5; Ezekiel xlvii. 1–12; and the present prophecy in the Revelation.

Millennium there will be those who *rule* in Christ's kingdom and those who *are ruled*, so it will be also in the eternal kingdom.

We may gather that those who are to enjoy the position of rulers in the eternal kingdom will be the same as those who reign with Christ during the Millennium, namely, the saints of the first resurrection; and that their high office and privilege will thus pass on into the eternal state. On the other hand, those who are ruled by them in the eternal kingdom would seem to be composed of all those countless multitudes, whose names will at the time of the final judgment and resurrection be found written in the Book of Life, as we have endeavoured to show from Scripture.

It is in accordance with this that we find St. John, in these two chapters, speaking of the "nations," or general inhabitants of the new earth, as distinguished from those who "reign" in the New Jerusalem, and who have a position there of peculiar nearness to the King. Speaking of the New Jerusalem he says: "And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads . . . and they shall reign for ever and ever."

We have before spoken of the happy service which will be the privilege of all the inhabitants of the earth in its perfected state.[1] But here it seems evident that a special service, and an exalted position of nearness to the Lord Jesus in His eternal kingdom, is what is described. The last clause refers to those who *rule*; the phrase "they shall see His face" indicates a position of nearness and honour, like that of courtiers or ministers of an eastern king, living continually in his presence. Thus, for example, we read, in 2 Kings xxv. 19, of some Jewish captives of high rank, who were taken to Babylon and placed in posts of honour at court, that "they saw the king's face." So also in Esther i. 14, we are told of "the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom."

It seems equally clear, too, that "*the nations*" spoken of in these two chapters refer to the general inhabitants of the earth as distinguished from these privileged ones. The "nations" are

[1] See page 481.

described as living in organised communities, under their several governments and rulers, called "the kings of the earth," while at the same time they are under the supreme rule and guidance of the privileged saints of the first resurrection, dwelling in the New Jerusalem, highest in rank and dignity in the eternal kingdom.

Moreover, it is foretold that during the *Millennial* reign of Christ, Jerusalem is to be the chief centre of light and divine guidance,—as, for instance, in Isaiah ii. 2, 3, where we read:—"And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." So, in a higher and more glorious sense, shall it be in the *eternal* kingdom; the New Jerusalem, the home of the saints, being the centre of Divine light and guidance to the whole world. We are told, in Revelation xxi. 24, etc., that the "kings of the earth" shall bring their "glory" thither, that is, their worship, their praise, and their choicest spiritual offerings; and that, in the same way, "the glory and the honour of the nations" shall also be brought into it. Hence we may understand that this continual communion and fellowship between the general inhabitants of the earth, and the metropolis, the New Jerusalem, where Christ and His saints will have their head-quarters, will be the means of preserving intact the holiness and happiness of the eternal world, and that thus the spiritual meaning of "the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations" will receive its accomplishment.[1]

In confirmation of what has been advanced above, and as

[1] Alford's comment on this point is as follows:—"Among the mysteries of this new heaven and new earth this is set forth to us; that, besides the glorified Church, there shall still be dwelling on the renewed earth nations, organized under kings, and (xxii. 2) saved [we would rather say '*kept* safe, and holy, and happy,' see page 485] by means of the influences of the heavenly city."

presenting an excellent summary of the various points we have been considering in these two deeply interesting and mysterious chapters of the Revelation, it may be well to quote here from some remarks by the able editor of *Lange's Commentary on the Revelation.* After a careful examination of the various views of commentators, Dr. Craven thus sums up the conclusions to which he has been led:—

"(1) The *period* of the New Jerusalem [*i.e.* of the earthly manifestation of it described in these two chapters] will be subsequent to the General Resurrection and Judgment of chapter xx. 11–15, and the new Creation of chapter xxi. 1. This is, manifestly, the normal sense of the connection between verses 1 and 2 of chapter xxi. . . .

"(2) Its *seat* will be the *New Earth* (comp. xxi. 1, 2, 24). It is vain for us to speculate as to whether that New Earth will be identical as to substance with the present, or whether it will be different. It is impossible for us to determine whether the present abode of the human race will be simply regenerated by fire, or whether from the universal chaos into which all things *may be* reduced (2 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. xx. 11) some entirely new Earth, or dwelling-place for man, may not be brought forth.

"(3) It will exist (1) as a real City, the glorious home and capital of a glorified Community (the Bride); (2) As a *Material Symbol* of that Community, its order and glory. . . . This double use of the symbol should occasion no surprise. For, in the first place, it is most common in all languages to denote by the same term, as *London*, sometimes the City, sometimes the mass of its inhabitants, and sometimes the complex of the two. This was common amongst the writers of the Scriptures—the Scriptural uses of Zion, Babylon, Tyre will present themselves as illustrations to the minds of all. And, secondly, a material City is frequently a type of its inhabitants, or of the State of which it is the Capital. . . . As the old Jerusalem symbolised the Israel of which it was the Capital, so the New Jerusalem will symbolise the glorified Community of whom it will be the abode and Capital. . . .

"(4) We should distinguish between the *Material City* and the *New Earth.* The former has its situation in the latter, as

London in England. We should also distinguish between the *citizens of the city* and the *nations* (xxi. 24). The former are risen and glorified Saints, who constitute the *Bride* (chap. xxi. 24), the *governors* (chap. xxii. 5, *last clause*) of the New Creation.[1] The latter are (probably) *men in the flesh* [this idea of men in the flesh in the eternal world is very questionable. Rather we would say that those who are governed will consist of all those raised to eternal life who are not amongst the privileged saints of the First Resurrection, but who nevertheless will equally with them be endowed with resurrection bodies. We shall recur to this point presently] who walk in the light of the City, who bring their glory and honour into it, and who are healed (or kept in health) by the leaves of its tree of life (chaps. xxi. 24–27; xxii. 2), *i.e.* who are under its instruction and government.

"(5) The term *The Bride* probably identifies the citizens of the New Jerusalem with the subjects of the First Resurrection. This body, the Bride (identical probably with the 144,000 of chap. xiv. 1), will probably be completed at the time of the *Marriage* (chap. xix. 7–9). Into that glorious company it is probable that only those who have been partakers of Christ's humiliation and suffering (either personally in company with Him, or throughout the present æon, the period of the humiliation of His body, the Church, Col. i. 24) shall be received (comp. Luke xxii. 28–30; Phil. iii. 10, 11; 2 Thess. i. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. ii. 10, 26; iii. 12, 21; vi. 9, 11; xix. 4–6). These are they who sit on Christ's Throne, who are united with Him in authority—who, as *related to* Him, constitute the Bride; as *together with* Him constitute the Kingdom, *i.e.* the governing power.

"(6) Chapter xxi. 2, 9, 10 does not refer to the Marriage—that took place at the beginning of the Millennial period—but to a *new manifestation* of the prophetical Bride, the Wife. . . . These verses describe her as descending from the bosom of her God out of the New Heaven, clothed in new beauty, upon the New Creation, over which she is to dominate. . . .

[1] Dr. Craven inclines to the view that the Bride, the subjects of the First Resurrection, will consist not of the whole body of the redeemed, but of a select portion. See on this point what has been already said in the present volume, on pages 310, 466, where we have endeavoured to show that this view is the correct one.

"(8) Although the New Jerusalem state is not to be confounded with the Millennial Kingdom, nor to be regarded as a simple continuance thereof, it is to be looked upon as the antitype of that Kingdom. In a sense it is that Kingdom raised to a higher plane—completely freed, in its territory and its subjects, from all remains of the curse. The Millennial Kingdom is the reign of the saints over a race and earth freed indeed from the assaults of Satan, but still, in measure, in sin and under the curse. The New Jerusalem [or eternal] period is that of the reign of the Saints over a race and earth perfectly purified.

"(9) The City itself, as it will have placed in it the Throne of God and the Lamb (xxii. 3) will become the noblest of the many mansions of Heaven. . . .

"(10) The prophecies of the Restoration and the Palingenesia (like those of the Advent) have probably a double application. Initially and typically they may refer to the Millennial Kingdom, which is a type of the New Jerusalem. Ultimately and completely they have respect to the latter, the Kingdom of the Perfect Restoration."

Dr. Craven adds some useful remarks on the modesty and caution that are needed in investigating these dim and mysterious revelations of the future. He says that he "feels most keenly that speculation on this subject is dangerous. Speculation, however [he says] to some degree there must be, if there be study—and study there must be, if we be obedient to the command implied in the benediction, 'Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy.'" [1]

We must now notice a theory referred to in the above extract, to which, as we have already mentioned, we feel compelled to take exception. The theory is this, that the "nations," or general inhabitants of this world in the eternal kingdom, will, to use Dr. Craven's word, "consist (probably) of *men in the flesh*, freed from sin and the curse, begetting a holy seed, and dwelling in blessedness under the government of the New Jerusalem. They will be,

[1] *The Revelation*, Lange, pages 390–392. A careful study of and acquaintance with the above excellent summary will greatly help the reader in understanding the mysteries of the closing chapters of the Revelation.

not the offspring of the glorified saints, who 'neither marry nor are given in marriage' (Matt. xxii. 30), but the descendants of those who live in the flesh during the period of the Millennial Kingdom." The advocates of this theory suggest, that the countless happy and holy multitudes who are found living on this earth at the close of the Millennium, after the final rebellion, of which we read in Revelation xx., has been extinguished, and when all those, who allowed themselves to be seduced by Satan into joining it, have been destroyed by fire, will live on into the eternal world, still men in the flesh as we are, but then at length in an absolutely perfect condition, free from all disease and infirmity, from old age, and even from death itself. And, as they thus live on in perfect holiness and happiness, but still the life of men in the flesh, marrying and giving in marriage, ruled by the first resurrection saints, now dwelling on the renewed earth with the Lord Jesus in their midst, this world will become the nursery ground, as it were, from which an endless series of holy and happy human beings, after fulfilling their appointed time and purpose here, will be first transfigured, without seeing death, into the resurrection body, and then transplanted into countless worlds in the realms of space, which are in the meantime being prepared to receive them.

This theory, which was upheld by Birks fifty years ago, has more recently been advocated by Canon Garratt and Dr. Guinness, as well as by Dr. Craven. With all due respect to these eminent authorities, whose opinions, put forward not with dogmatism, but with modesty and caution, cannot but deserve attention, we are nevertheless compelled to think that it is a theory which has no sure foundation in Scripture, which would rather seem to point the other way.

In the first place, it seems as impossible to think of myriads of men in the flesh living on earth during the fiery cataclysm, when the elements shall melt in fervent heat, as to conceive of their being transported in their ordinary material bodies of flesh through space, out of reach of the conflagration, to be afterwards returned to the earth.

Secondly, the "perpetual generations" mentioned in God's covenant with Noah, and the "thousands of generations"

mentioned elsewhere, on which passages chiefly Prof. Birks supports the theory, can scarcely be taken as necessitating such a meaning. It has been shown by Mr. Goodhart and others, as also more recently by Dr. Moule in his commentary on Romans, chapter ii. 7, that such allusions to perpetuity, and also such expressions as "eternal," "for ever," etc., must be taken not absolutely, but meaning *as long as the circumstances of the case admit of.* The latter writer, speaking of the phrase "eternal," says:—"If used *e.g.*, with regard to the present world, or a human lifetime, it naturally means unending while that world, or lifetime, lasts. When applied to the unseen and ultimate world, it appears equally naturally to mean unending while that world lasts"; and so he defines the ruling idea of the expression as "*duration unending in respect of the period referred to.*"[1]

In the third place, although our Lord's saying to His disciples in Luke xx. 34–36, concerning the resurrection life, that they "neither marry, nor are given in marriage," applies primarily to the saints of the first resurrection, yet, as we have already shown,[2] the words "they that shall be accounted worthy to attain to that world" must also include within their scope those who shall obtain eternal life at the time of the final resurrection; and it is these latter, we believe, the "innumerable multitude" of those who shall ultimately be found to have their names written in the book of life, and not another multitude of "men in the flesh," who will constitute the "nations" of the eternal kingdom, subordinate to the saints of the New Jerusalem. We may add that St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians xv. 50:—"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,"—seem further to confirm our conclusion that the theory we are considering is not one that can safely be entertained.

We would therefore picture this earth, when at last the eternal kingdom of God shall be established upon it, not as the abode of flesh and blood, not as a scene of marrying and giving in marriage, but rather as a world peopled by inhabitants clothed in the glorious spiritual body described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians

[1] *Cambridge Bible for Schools: Romans*, page 68. We have previously mentioned an instance of this use of the expression. See page 445, *note*.

[2] See page 431.

xv., so that in this particular respect they will be "equal to the angels," according to the teaching given by our Lord Himself in the passage of St. Luke cited above. Of their actual life and employment we have no definite revelation, nor could we expect it, since it would have to deal with conditions of life entirely beyond and above our present experience and understanding. What is revealed to us is that it will be a life of holiness and happiness, and praise, and service of God,—a life which will call into exercise new and exalted powers of mind and body, and therefore will supply us with new sources of endless joy. This is enough for us to know.

We have now reached the extreme limit of the horizon of the heavenly picture in the Revelation, and all further details are lost in a haze of glory. We have reached the time when God's redemptive purposes with regard to this ruined world will have been fully carried out. May we not see in this, if not an interpretation, at least a beautiful application, of the parable of the Lost Sheep? We read in that parable how the faithful shepherd left the ninety and nine sheep that were feeding on the hilly grazing-lands of Judæa (for such is the meaning of the "wilderness" in that passage), and at the risk of his life went to seek and to save the one lost sheep that had wandered into danger; and how, when he had found it, he laid it on his shoulders, rejoicing, and having restored it to safety, invited his neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." May it not be that this poor sin-smitten world of ours is the one black spot, the one lost sheep, in God's universe, the one world, amongst the innumerable worlds in space, wherein sin and Satan have found foothold? And just because it is the one lost world, the Lord Jesus, the Creator of worlds, like the good shepherd, left the ninety and nine which had not wandered, so to speak,—left the glory of heaven in which He was reigning as supreme King over all worlds,—and went to seek and to save that which was lost, to work redemption for this ruined earth, and bring it into a state of perfect safety and happiness.

This world, in its present condition, is like a province of a

great empire which has fallen into a state of disorder and rebellion. When that rebellion is finally put down, and the authority of the King of Heaven fully restored, then the prayer, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," will receive its completed fulfilment. Then will be perfectly realized the idea of heaven upon earth; for then earth will be a part of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The parable also speaks of united rejoicing over the finding and restoration of the lost sheep. Does not this remind us of a grand occasion of rejoicing that will one day take place, in connection with the perfect restoration of this earth which we have been considering? When that time comes, when the whole scheme is worked out, when the lost sheep is thus restored, then the beautiful words of the parable—"He layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home he calleth his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost,"—will receive another and infinitely grander fulfilment, not merely upon the scale of a saved individual, but upon that of a saved world.

The Jews used to say that those who had never seen the rejoicing at the Feast of Tabernacles did not know what joy was. That feast, which was to be held every autumn, when the whole produce of the year was safely gathered in, was the grand harvest-home of the nation. It was a time of special festivity, of song, and of mutual friendship and congratulation. We have previously shown, in our explanation of Revelation vii.,[1] that this Feast of Tabernacles was a picture or type of the glorious harvest-home at the beginning of the eternal kingdom, the time reached in the last two chapters of the Revelation, when all who have been saved out of this evil world, through the blood of Christ, will meet together, and rejoice over the prospect of an endless eternity of bliss, which they will enjoy in each other's society. St. John, in the second vision of Revelation vii., above referred to, beheld "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands [just as the Jews waved palm-

[1] See page 308.

branches at the Feast of Tabernacles in token of their joy]; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation [*i.e.* praise for salvation] unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." And then, too, St. John saw in his vision, exhibited on the grandest scale possible, that *rejoicing in sympathy* which forms a prominent feature in our Lord's parable; for he saw "all the angels standing round about the throne," ascribing praise and thanksgiving to God, and rejoicing over those who were once lost sheep, now gathered into the one flock of the One Shepherd.

There is yet one further point, in connection with what St. Paul calls the "great mystery" of Christ and His Church, upon which these closing chapters of the Revelation seem to throw light, and into which, therefore, we may humbly and reverently inquire.

That which constitutes the chief splendour of the whole description of the New Jerusalem—gathering, as it were, all other rays of glory into one blaze of light,—is the fact, already noticed, that the King, the *Lord Jesus*, will be there, dwelling in the midst of His chosen ones, an ever-present source of light and joy to all. Then will be fully realized the meaning of the name Emmanuel, *God with us*. We have explained that a wonderful manifestation of the Shekinah glory may very probably be an accompaniment of the Divine presence. St. John says:—"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb." [1]

There is good reason to believe that here, as in the case of the great judgment scene, we must not conceive of God the Father being manifested otherwise than in the person of God the Son. It seems to have been given to the beloved disciple John especially to make prominent the truth of the Godhead of the Son, and His co-equality with the Father, so that he applies the same terms to the one and to the other; and sometimes it is not easy to determine which of the Divine Persons is in the mind of the apostle.[2]

[1] Revelation xxi. 27 (R.V.).

[2] See, for instance, 1 John ii. 29, and iii. 1, with Alford's note.

The whole context of the present passage seems to make it clear that it is the Lord Jesus who is the central figure of the scene. And though St. John, in describing the wonderful vision, constantly makes use of the expression "God and the Lamb," in order to keep prominent the unity of the Son with the Father, he nevertheless represents Christ as the only Person of the blessed Trinity who will be both visibly and personally present on this earth in the eternal kingdom. Thus, in chapter xxii. 3, 4, we read: —"And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face." Here the language employed makes it clear that it is only *one* Person who is spoken of as dwelling in the midst of the elect; and that this person is *Christ*—the Bridegroom with His Bride.

Dr. Van Oosterzee draws attention to this point in his excellent volume on *The Person and Work of the Redeemer* (pp. 449, 493). He well observes that the *God-man* will be the centre of the future world of men; and says:—"We may legitimately deduce . . . that the Father will present Himself to the contemplation and enjoyment of believers, even in the heavenly state, not immediately, but *in and through the Son.* Such an idea is entirely in harmony with the Divine dispensations, so far as we are acquainted with them, and with the place occupied by the Son as the centre of the whole plan of salvation formed on the part of the Father." Similarly Lange, commenting on the words in St. John's description of the glory of the New Jerusalem quoted above, namely, that "the lamp thereof is the Lamb," says, "The spiritual radiance proceeding from God *through Christ His Light-bearer.*"

The place where God the Father dwells, the grand centre of the vast universe, from which it is ruled and controlled, is spoken of in Scripture as "far above all heavens," and "in light unapproachable."[1] There is no reason to suppose that God the Father will vacate this throne of His glory, and come in His own Person to take up His permanent abode upon this earth in the

[1] Cf. 1 Timothy vi. 16. "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." So Christ, who is represented in Scripture as now sitting "on the right hand of God," is said to have "ascended far above all heavens" (Eph. iv. 10).

eternal Kingdom. Our present Scripture does not lead us to believe this, and it seems altogether improbable. But St. John's vision does tell us that *God the Son* will take this step. The connection between the God-man and redeemed mankind is close, and is a tie which does not exist between Christ and any other created beings. Our Lord Himself told His disciples that He was going away to prepare a place for them, and that He would come again to take them to be with Him; and we have seen reason to believe that this prepared place, wherever it may be, will be the temporary home of Christ and His chosen ones during the Millennium, from whence He will administer His government over this earth during that transitional age. The present passage of the Revelation tells us that, at the *end* of His Millennial rule, Christ will leave that *temporary* home, and come to dwell on this earth as His *permanent* home, in its purified and perfected condition. Of course, however, it is not meant that the presence of our Lord will be *confined* to this earth, but only that it will be the chosen spot of His manifestation and favour. Thus it would appear that the scene of His lowest humiliation is hereafter to be the special centre of His highest glory.

If, therefore, this is the meaning of the wonderful and mysterious revelation given to us in these chapters—if the Lord Jesus is going to leave His Father's home in the highest heavens, where He now sits "at God's right hand," and if He is eventually coming to dwell with His Bride, and the redeemed out of all mankind, on this glorified earth, as His future home, in the sense of its being the spot which He will specially honour, and the centre from which He will exercise His rule in the eternal kingdom of God, then, surely, it seems to throw a further ray of light upon the hidden meaning of that deep mystery, to which St. Paul alludes in his epistle to the Ephesians:—"He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church; because we are members of his body. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother [his former home], and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church."[1] The idea of leaving *father and mother*, leaving

[1] Ephesians v. 28–32.

the former home, which is made prominent in this passage, seems to be unnoticed by commentators, as if it formed no part of the "great mystery," but surely the remarkable correspondence of this thought with the truth which we have been considering, that Christ will *leave His former home* in the highest heavens where He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and will eventually come to dwell with His Bride, the Church, in His new home upon this earth in its purified and glorified condition, suggests that this wonderful revelation concerning Christ and His faithful Church, was also contained hidden beneath the surface of that inspired record of the institution of marriage which St. Paul quotes in illustration of his subject.[1]

With this thought we may conclude our glimpse into the glory of the eternal kingdom. May the writer of these pages, and all who read them, have a share in that glory.

Some eighteen centuries have passed since our Lord's closing message was given, at the end of the Revelation: "He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly." Although with Him a thousand years are but as one day, yet we may well believe that the time of His Advent cannot now be very far off. Both Historical and Futurist students of the prophetic Word are agreed in thinking that the signs of the times and the many convergent lines indicated by prophecy point towards the approach of the Coming King. May our hearts respond to the closing words of St. John: "Amen: come, Lord Jesus."

[1] Dr. Moule, in his excellent commentary on the *Ephesians* (*Cambridge Bible*) goes some way in the direction of this thought, when he says of St. Paul's reference to the institution of marriage, as recorded in Genesis ii. 24,—"We may reverently infer that the Apostle was guided to see in that verse a Divine parable of the Coming Forth of the Lord, the *Man* of Men, from the *Father*, and His present and eternal mystical Union with the true Church, His Bride." But this comment scarcely seems to go far enough. In the light afforded by the last two chapters of the Revelation, we see that the idea presented is not merely that of a "coming forth" from the former home, but also that of entering into a new and separate home prepared for the Bride.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

We have now finished our brief explanation of the meaning of the difficult book of the Revelation, and have thus come to the end of our appointed task of presenting to our readers, from the Historical point of view, a connected outline and interpretation of the great apocalyptic prophecies in Scripture, more especially of those relating to the present dispensation and to the coming Millennial age.

We have endeavoured, as we stated at the outset, not only to prove the truth of the historical method of explaining these Scriptures, but also to show the erroneous nature of the opposing system of Futurism. We have sought to meet all the objections raised by antagonistic writers. At the same time we have profited by the criticisms of opponents, and so, we trust, have been enabled to throw fresh light upon the truth of the Historical system by correcting, or stating more clearly, some points of detail which seemed open to objection, and also by adding further illustration and proof. Thus we hope to have made the way more plain for those who wish to study the interesting but difficult subject of prophecy.

It only remains to add some concluding observations by way of summing up, and with the view of emphasising a few important points that have been touched upon before.

As we have already remarked, there can be no such thing as a *fusion* of the Preterist, the Futurist, and the Historical systems.[1] Some writers, by selecting a few points which seem to them to admit of such blending, and by treating these in broad and general terms, have endeavoured to make out that such a fusion of opposing systems is possible and desirable. But it is no more

[1] See pages 379, 380.

possible than the suggested union of the divergent Churches of Christendom. In each case, so long as there is divergence of belief with regard to *essential points of truth*, whether as regards the great question of salvation, in the one case, or that of interpreting God's prophetic Word in the other, there can be no true union with those who on these essential points hold views which we believe to be subversive of truth.

The *gap-theory*, for example, of which we have previously spoken at length,[1] and which figures so largely in Futurist expositions, must either be true or false; it cannot be both. Again, Futurists tell us that the latter part of the prophecy of the *Seventy Weeks* refers to the doings of the Antichrist, whom they expect at the close of this dispensation; Historicists, on the contrary, maintain, as we have endeavoured to show, that there is no reference to the Antichrist at all in that prophecy. Both cannot be right. So, again, the crisis fixed in God's Word for the *appearance of the Antichrist*,—a crisis checked and counterchecked by marks of the most complicated and detailed description,—must, from the very nature of the case, be either in the past or in the future; it cannot be both. Historicists prove, as we have endeavoured to make clear, by abundant and cumulative evidence, that this crisis has passed, and that the Antichrist, which was then to begin to be manifested, was none other than the *Papacy*. Futurists assert that the crisis and the Antichrist are still in the future. One of these two opposing views must be false. Again, Historicists show that the chain of visions portrayed in the mass of the Book of Revelation in all their minute and complicated details of time, character, actions, etc., have been receiving their fulfilment during the whole course of this dispensation, in the history of the Church and the world; each link in the chain, each detail in the description, falling, with more or less of distinctness, into its proper place, and forming in combination one harmonious whole, answering to the prophetic portraiture, like some seal to the elaborately engraved die which stamped it. Futurists, on the other hand, proceed upon a totally different system of interpretation, asserting that these complicated prophecies, which occupy so much of the Book of the Revelation,

[1] See pages 24, etc.; 68, etc.

refer to events still future, and so putting an entirely different meaning upon the various details, as we have endeavoured to point out in the course of our inquiry. *Both* these systems of interpretation *cannot be right.* We call upon our readers to choose which they think most consistent with sound reason and sober judgment.

Of course there are points in the range of prophetical interpretation upon which both may agree, such as the pre-millennial coming of Christ, and the character of the Millennial dispensation; just as Sacerdotalists and Evangelicals hold some points in common, as, for instance, the inspiration of Scripture and a belief in the Trinity. But there are other points and general principles, affecting the interpretation of nearly the whole of the apocalyptic prophecies, in which the Historical and Futurist schools differ so entirely, as we have instanced above, that there can be no fusion or union between them. We must make our choice between a system which we believe to be false in vital points and one which we hold to be true, and in accordance with the intention of God in giving us these prophecies. We ought, however, to love those from whom we differ, and to give them full credit for sincerity of purpose; but if we believe them to be seriously wrong, the truest charity is to endeavour in the spirit of love to show them where they are wrong, and to try and win them over to what we hold to be the true view; or, at all events, to keep others from falling into what we believe to be their mistakes.

We are glad that our Futurist brethren are at one with us in holding firmly that important doctrine, without which a right understanding of the prophetical Word is impossible, namely, the doctrine of the *pre-millennial* coming of the Lord Jesus to set up His visible Kingdom on this earth; and that His peaceful and glorious reign over a renovated world will last, as we are told in the Revelation, for a thousand years; after which, having completed His mediatorial work, He will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, as we read in 1 Corinthians xv. 24. We hold in common, also, that at the end of His reign, after the final purging of the world by fire, and its reconstruction in a perfected condition, as foretold in 2 Peter iii., and after the epoch of the great general judgment, described in Revelation xx., the Millennial

Kingdom will merge into the eternal Kingdom of God. We believe with them that the end of the present age is approaching, and that there are many signs to show that the events connected with the return of the Lord may be expected soon to begin to set in. We rejoice that our brethren are making efforts to bring this solemn fact before the notice of the public, though we could wish that it were apart from what we believe to be the errors of their system. We agree with them that the Hebrew nation is to be restored to the Holy Land in connection with the coming of our Lord. Further, we hold with Futurists that there is a very terrible time approaching, the time of the Great Tribulation, which perhaps may be near at hand, and that the final manifestation of God's wrath against obstinate and wilful blindness and sin has still to be exhibited, on a scale which the world has never yet witnessed. Moreover, as before pointed out, the Historical system does not deny that during this epoch of tribulation some inhuman monster may possibly play a conspicuous part, as Antiochus, Nero, or Robespierre did in the past.[1] Only we say that such a monster, *if he appear* (a point on which it is wiser not to be too positive), will not be the Great Antichrist which was foretold by the prophets. The subject of those prophecies is a far greater power of evil, whose career has lasted, not for a few years merely, but for more than twelve centuries, and has worked incalculable mischief and cruelty against the cause of Christ. If therefore some such dread personage as Futurists expect (perhaps, as some think, himself the last occupant of the Papal chair) were to arise in days to come, and vividly manifest some of the worst characteristics of the great Papal Antichrist, he would, as we have before pointed out, be an illustration, and not the fulfilment, of the Antichrist of prophecy—an after-illustration, on a lesser scale, of what has already been fulfilled on the grand scale of the Papacy.

The admission of this possibility by Historical interpreters in no way, therefore, interferes with the view which is the distinguishing feature of their system as regards the question of the Antichrist, and which, as we have shown, can be amply proved by a comparison of all the complex prophecies on the subject;

[1] See page 221.

namely, that the Antichrist of prophecy,—foretold as the "Little Horn" of the fourth Beast in Daniel vii., as the "Man of Sin" spoken of by St. Paul, as the "Antichrist" mentioned by St. John in his epistles, and as the "Beast" of the Revelation under its seventh head revived,—means *the Papal imperial rule headed up and represented in the person of the Pope of Rome.*

We believe that an exaggerated anticipation of the coming of a supernatural individual Antichrist leads persons to imagine that his outline can be discerned in Scriptures that have no reference to Antichrist at all, as, for instance, in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. Moreover, the same exaggerated anticipation so fills their mind, and obscures their spiritual vision that it prevents the discernment of the fact that the great Antichrist of prophecy has already appeared, and is still a great danger, though the end of his existence is approaching. The prophetic warnings, given in vivid and symbolic terms by Daniel, Paul, and John, concerning the havoc which was to be wrought in the Church of Christ by the great and terrible Romish Apostasy, are transformed by our Futurist brethren into literal descriptions of the person and doings of the supernatural being, for whose appearance they are looking. And, further, by their ultra-literal method of interpretation, they are led to take the other symbolic prophecies, forming the chief portion of the book of Revelation, and given in a series of related visions, which historical interpreters show to refer to the whole of this dispensation, as if they were literal descriptions of events still future—a method of interpretation involving extravagances, not to say absurdities, when carried out in detail.

Such Futurist teachings are held by Historical interpreters to be unsound and misleading, and to be the outcome of an erroneous method of exposition, which fails duly to recognise the symbolic or mysterious character in which, for wise purposes, God has clothed His predictions, especially those given through the two great apocalyptic prophets Daniel and John.

More particularly is this teaching of the Futurists, which diverts the prophecies of the Antichrist from their true fulfilment in the Papacy to some possible individual of the future, to be deplored at the present time, when, in our own country

the true nature of the great Romish Apostasy, as depicted for our warning in God's prophetic Word, so much needs to be recognised. Would it not be more wise to keep to the front the great and true fulfilment in the Papal power, than to dream about the doings of a possible future individual? We repeat that the practical thing for us to do is to bear in mind, that the great Antichrist of prophecy *has* appeared, at the very time foretold for his appearance, and that though his characteristic period of 1260 years of prospering has run out, and though the preliminary blow has fallen, in the loss of the Temporal Power in 1870, a token of his ultimate doom, yet his power for mischief is still tremendous. He is making special efforts in England and America, the great centres of Gospel light, in the hope of so darkening that light as to regain his former ascendancy in the world. He is working actively in our midst by corrupting simplicity and truth, both as regards ritual and doctrine, in the established Church, as is admitted by some of our own Bishops, and his progress is a matter of exultation amongst the bishops of the Church of Rome. Therefore it is needful for all lovers of truth in these days to bear in mind the warning cry in the Revelation, in view of the destined destruction of the Papal Babylon:—"Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."[1] It is especially needful for students of prophecy to present a united front against the machinations of Rome, and in the same spirit which animated the great leaders of the Reformation, to combine in unmasking the great *Papal* Antichrist, by showing forth its identity with the Antichrist of prophecy concerning whose coming God warned His Church.

We would invite our readers, therefore, to accept the Historical interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy as the true one; and to leave the point of whether or not there may yet be any further illustration of some of the main features, in the modified way we have suggested, as an open question, to be solved by the future. We would submit that this is not only the true attitude, but also the most practical. Speaking generally, we may regard Satan's forces, opposing Christ and His cause in the world, as

[1] Revelation xviii. 4 (R.V.).

being massed in two camps, *infidelity* and *superstition*. Under the banner of the former are ranged, not only open infidelity, but also agnosticism, materialism, and a number of other dangerous and insinuating forms of teaching with regard to the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, the Atonement, the Person and Work of Christ, and other great and vital questions. The Historical method of interpretation meets the forces of *infidelity* by putting forward God's own test of Divine truth, namely, *the fulfilment of prophecy*,[1] showing by the marvellous correspondence of the events of history with what was symbolically foretold by Daniel, Paul, and John, that much of what was thus foretold has been fulfilled, or is now fulfilling; and that, therefore, God's Word is an *inspired* Word, written under the direction of One who knows the end from the beginning. So, also, it meets the forces of *superstition*, with its attendant sacerdotalism and priestcraft (the tendency to which in poor fallen human nature has only been too manifest all down through the ages), by proving that Christ warned His Church through His prophets, that in His long absence during the present dispensation this fatal tendency of human nature would exhibit itself in a most subtle, cruel, and devastating form, that of *the Papal apostasy*, *the Antichrist of prophecy*.

The Historical system of interpretation thus places in the hands of Christ's faithful followers a weapon of tremendous power, wherewith to hold the fort against Satan's desperate assaults in these latter days. We believe that the whole tendency of Futurism is to weaken the power of this weapon, if not to throw it away. The very arguments that are used by Futurists are precisely those which Romish writers have employed in order to prevent the application of these prophecies to their own system. And thus, without their intending it, the tendency of the teaching of our Futurist brethren is really to play into the hands of the enemy, by so filling the imagination of people with the future exploits of some supernatural monster, about which there can be no certainty, that their attention is diverted from the fact, which we have endeavoured to prove in these pages, namely, that the Antichrist has already appeared in the

[1] Compare Deuteronomy xviii. 21, 22.

Papacy, and is at the present moment plotting schemes full of peril to Christ's Church, which should be combated and unmasked by all students of prophecy and all faithful followers of Christ.

And, further, the Historical system of interpreting apocalyptic prophecy not only verifies God's Word, and identifies the Antichrist, but it also shows us the point which has been reached in the unfolding of God's purposes, and enables us, with a reasonable amount of certainty, to place our finger upon that spot in the chart of prophecy which corresponds to our present position ; and so brings prominently before us the blessed hope, that the events which will usher in the coming of our Lord may be expected before long to begin to be manifested, in a way that shall command the attention of the world.

The signs that betoken the approach of that glorious crisis are accumulating year by year, and becoming more and more distinct, thus making the study of prophecy a matter of deepening interest and of increasing necessity, for all who would maintain the enjoined attitude of servants looking for the return of their Lord.

That the Holy Spirit who inspired the prophetic Word may give us a right judgment in all things, and guide us into all truth, is the prayer of the author of this volume both for himself and his readers.

APPENDIX A

THE VISION OF THE RAM, THE HE-GOAT, AND THE LITTLE HORN, IN DANIEL VIII

It should be noted that the portion of the book of Daniel, containing the account of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the Great Image, the setting up of the image of gold in the plain of Dura, the vision of the great tree which Nebuchadnezzar saw, and Daniel's vision of the four Beasts—from ch. ii. 4 to the end of ch. vii.—is all written in *Chaldee*. In chapter viii. the Chaldee dialect is dropped and the *Hebrew* language resumed. The reason seems clearly to be, that in the portion above noticed, which relates more especially to the Gentile world, a Gentile language is used. But the further prophecies in the rest of the book are more especially connected with the fortunes of the Jewish nation, and so the Hebrew language is appropriately employed.

The vision of the Ram and He-goat, in chap. viii., was seen by Daniel only two years after that of the Four Beasts, in chap. vii., and is supplementary to it, giving further details concerning the second and third empires, namely, Medo-Persia and Greece. These, in the vision of chap. vii., were typified by a Bear and a Leopard, but in this vision are presented under the figures of a Ram and a He-goat. And as in the former vision of the Four Beasts, the chief topic of the whole revelation was the destructive career of a remarkable Little Horn, that was to spring up amongst the horns or kingdoms in the empire symbolised by the fourth Beast, so also in the vision of chapter viii., the chief feature is the career of another Little Horn, destined to run a similarly baneful course. But *this* Little Horn is described as rising up, not *amongst* the horns of the *fourth*, or Roman Empire, but *out of* one of the horns or kingdoms of the *third*, or Greek Empire, symbolised as we have said, by the He-goat of the present vision. The time of its appearance is said to be "*in the latter time*" of the four "horns," or kingdoms, or dynasties, which were to come into power in the Greek Empire. This phrase points on to a far distant period, to a time when those Kingdoms had, in fact, passed under the supremacy of the Roman Empire. Hence, as we shall see, these two Little Horns are contemporaneous. The one is the "horn" of the Papal Power, the other is that of the Mohammedan Power. These are the two great outstanding apostasies of the present dispensation. It is a well-known remark of Luther, that as these two Powers rose about the same time, so they will perish together. In many points of character and destiny, the "little horn" of the Papacy and the "little horn" of Mohammedanism strikingly resemble each other. Both have proved themselves cruel, persecuting the saints of God, opposing and perverting the truth, utterly unscrupulous in advancing their own power by

any and every means; though the one does all this in the name of Christ, the other in that of Mahomet. Both will finally be extinguished at the coming of Christ.

Scott, the well-known commentator of more than fifty years ago, speaking of the Papal Little Horn in Daniel vii., and that of Mohammedanism in Daniel viii., says:—"In neither case, as it appears to me, is the temporal dominion *exclusively*, or even *primarily* foretold; but the *religious delusion*." Accordingly, while he anticipated from prophecy the decay and downfall of the *temporal* power of Mohammedanism, as well as of that of the Papacy, he rightly added, that in each case "the effect of the *spiritual* delusion will nevertheless remain, till dispelled by the light of Divine truth"; and this, as we have shown, will not be until the coming of Him who is "the Sun of righteousness."

Let us now briefly notice the principal passages of the prophetic vision. Daniel says he saw "a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last." This exactly accords with history. The angel explains in verse 20, "The ram which thou sawest that had the two horns, they are the Kings of Media and Persia." The "horns," or "kings," here clearly mean the dynasties or kingdoms of Media and Persia. Of these, that of Media was at first the more prominent; but Persia, under Cyrus, eventually rose to be the leading power in the united empire, "the higher came up last." We read further, of Daniel's vision, "I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward" (verse 4). This was fulfilled in the conquests by Cyrus and his successors, westward into Babylon and Syria, northward into Lydia and Scythia, and southward into Egypt.

Next in the vision comes the vivid account of the overthrow of the Ram by the He-goat, in other words the conquest of the Medo-Persian Power by that of Greece. Daniel says:—"Behold, an he-goat came from the west [the territory of Greece lay to the west of Media and Persia] over the face of the whole earth [that is, over the whole Eastern Empire], and touched not the ground [denoting the rapid course of conquest]: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes" (verse 5). The angel Gabriel thus explains the goat and the remarkable single horn:—"The rough he-goat is the king [*i.e.* kingdom or empire] of Greece, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king" (verse 21). By the "first king," Alexander the Great is specially meant, as all commentators are agreed. His remarkable, though brief, career of conquest of the Medo-Persian Power, is one of the most extraordinary and striking facts of history. But the common dynastic meaning of "king" in Daniel is not even here to be wholly excluded. After Alexander's death, his brother, and then his son, succeeded him in Macedonia; but their rule was not acknowledged over the Empire. Various other aspirants, each in his own province, endeavoured to attain to power. With the murder of both brother and son, which was accomplished within ten or twelve years from Alexander's death, the dynasty of Alexander was extirpated. And after another ten years of confusion and rivalry between various competitors for power, a formal division of the empire was at last made amongst four. In the west, the King-

dom of Macedon was assigned to Cassander and his successors; Thrace in the north to Lysimachus; Syria in the east, with Babylon, to Seleucus; and, in the south, Egypt with the neighbouring region of Arabia and Palestine, to Ptolemy. Thus was fulfilled the vision recorded in verse 8:—"And the he-goat magnified himself exceedingly [alluding to the wide conquests, and extension of the Greek Empire, by Alexander]: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken [Alexander was cut off at the zenith of his career, and his house soon after extirpated]; and instead of it there came up four notable horns towards the four winds of heaven [fulfilled in the partition of the Empire as above explained]." The interpretation given by the angel in verse 21 accords with the history with similar accuracy:—"And the rough he-goat is the king [or world-empire] of Greece: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. And as for that [horn] which was broken [the kingdom or dynasty of Alexander], in the place whereof four [horns] stood up, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation [or empire of Greece], but not with his power." As Prof. Birks well remarks:—"The strength of Alexander's sceptre had already passed away. The new kingdoms were 'not according to his power.' Two of them [Macedon and Thrace] were soon absorbed into one; and the rest fell into rapid decay; till Macedon, Egypt, and Syria, all sank alike beneath the domination of Rome." [1]

Now we come to that which was the chief subject of the vision, namely, the rise of the Eastern Little Horn out of one of these four "horns" or kingdoms. It was out of the kingdom of *Egypt* that this little horn sprang up, "in the latter time," when Rome was itself divided. The Egyptian dominion of the Ptolemies included Arabia and Judæa, and it was in Arabia that the horn first developed itself for it was here that Mahomet stirred up the Saracens, or Arabs, to that career of conquest which made the *Mohammedan Power*; and this, as we said at the outset, is the Little Horn of this prophecy, at one time a terror to the world.

Here let us draw attention to what we have mentioned before, namely, that it is that aspect of the career of this Little Horn which more particularly concerns the East, and the Holy Land, and Daniel's people the Jews, which is especially dwelt upon in this prophecy. In our explanation of Revelation ix., we showed that this same Mohammedan Power was then foretold in two symbolic visions, the locust-scorpions of the first vision symbolising the invasions of the Saracens, instigated by Mahomet and the Koran, while the myriads of the horsemen from the Euphrates, in the second vision, denoted the Turkish Power, which afterwards rose into ascendency in the East, and propagated by fierce warfare the same false religion. We pointed out that these two devastating Mohammedan scourges were symbolically foreshadowed in Revelation ix., as being appointed by God to inflict judgments upon the apostasy of Christendom in the *West*: whereas the Little Horn of Daniel viii. refers, as we have said, to the desolating career of the same Power in the *East*.

Let us now briefly notice some of the principal points in the description of this Little Horn. In the first place, the fulfilment was to be "in the latter time of the indignation [the word 'indignation' has a special reference to

[1] *The Two Later Visions of Daniel*, p 29.

God's judgments upon the Jewish nation]: for it belongeth to the appointed time of the end" (verse 19). This clearly points much beyond the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, whom some interpreters put forward as the fulfilment of this prophecy. It refers to a Power that would spring up in an age far distant from the time of Daniel, and fitly denotes one that would arise in the course of the present dispensation, and last till the closing portion of it. Moreover it was to be "when the transgressors are come to the full." The Jews filled up their transgression by crucifying their Lord, and by persistently rejecting Christianity afterwards. Greek Christianity also comes within the scope of this judgment, and before the time of Mahomet the corruption of that form of religion had come to the full. Then, at length, the "horn" of the Moslem Power appeared, as a judgment on apostasy. It was at first a *little* one, but afterwards "waxed exceeding great." The word "horn" here retains its common meaning of a *dynasty*, that of the Caliphate, but, as in the case of Alexander already mentioned, there is a special personal reference to the founder, in this case Mahomet. He rose from a small beginning as a private individual, but the Power he originated increased with marvellous rapidity "toward the south," Arabia and Egypt, "toward the east," Mesopotamia, Persia, and Transoxiana, and "toward the glorious land" or Palestine (verse 9). In less than a hundred years, the Caliphs who succeeded him had spread their conquests over Arabia, Syria, Persia, Tartary, Egypt, Africa, and Spain. This power is described (verse 23) as a "king of fierce countenance": a description which must not be understood merely of an individual physiognomy, but as implying ferocity of character (compare "a nation of fierce countenance," Deut. xxviii. 50), and as denoting the ferocious warfare by which Mahomet and his successors enforced the Moslem Power, and the religion of the Koran; a ferocity which has remained a characteristic of Moslem warfare, even to the present day. Gibbon says:—"The Arabs or Saracens, who spread their conquests from India to Spain, had languished in poverty and contempt, till Mahomet breathed into those savage bodies the soul of enthusiasm"; and the fierceness of the Turk is proverbial. Another characteristic, that of "understanding dark sentences," refers to the pretended revelations upon which the Mahommedan religion is based. We read further, of this "horn" (verse 10):—"And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars [*i.e.* rulers] it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them." Again, in verse 24:—"He shall destroy the mighty ones and the holy people." In these figurative and mysterious expressions we seem to have described the warfare and antagonism between the imposture of Mahomet, and the revealed religion of God. The professed followers of the God of the Bible, though fallen into error and corruption, as was the condition both of Daniel's people and of the Eastern Christians, and therefore deserving chastisement, might nevertheless be considered as "the host of heaven," in contrast with those who followed Allah instead of the God of revelation, the Koran instead of the Bible, and Mahomet instead of Christ.[1] Hence of this "horn"

[1] By the term "mighty ones" would seem to be denoted the professed Christian Powers in the East, since the Jews, in their scattered and enfeebled condition, could be hardly so designated; whereas "the holy ones" might well denote Daniel's people, the nation still beloved by God, though blinded and hardened. There is an obvious veil of mystery in the use of such expressions.

or "king" it is further said, "Yea, it magnified itself, even to the prince of the host" (verse 11); and "he shall also stand up against the prince of princes" (verse 25). Mahomet acknowleged Moses and Christ to have been prophets, but he placed himself above them. The Little Horn's further hostility towards God and His people is then described (verse 11):—"And it took away from him the continual burnt offering, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt offering through transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground" (R.V.).

Here it should be noted that "burnt offering" is not in the original, which is simply "the continual" and means, as well explained in *Ellicott's Commentary*, everything permanent in the public worship of God, such as sacrifices, prayers, preaching, etc. Accordingly Prof. Murphy renders the expression "the standing service," *i.e.* the stated mode of the worship of the true God, which existed in one form amongst the Jews, and in another amongst the Christians who succeeded them. Jerusalem witnessed several overthrows of God's standing order of public service; and these crises of forcible suppression of the worship of the true God are alluded to in prophecy under general and mysterious terms, such as the "abomination of desolation," and the casting down of the sanctuary,—descriptions which apply with more or less exactness to each crisis. As Prof. Murphy says, "This standing ordinance was interrupted for a short time in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, for a much longer time after the burning of the Temple and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and for a still more lengthened period after the capture of the city in the days of Omar." The Mohammedan Mosque of Omar was erected on the sacred site, and continues to the present day a token and monument of Moslem dominion in the Holy Land; and thus was completed the fulfilment of the vision concerning "the trangession that maketh desolate [the desolation was shown in verse 12 to be a judgment on *transgression* and corruption], to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot" (verse 13).

It is further said of this "horn," that it "cast down truth"; *i.e.* it substituted the false teaching of the Koran (verse 12), and that "through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand" (verse 25). The whole Power of Mohammedanism is based upon corruption, and the pretended revelation given to Mahomet.

Finally, the Power is to be "broken without hand" (verse 25). This is by some interpreted to mean, by the direct agency of God. But Prof. Birks and others give a preferable meaning, "without help," corresponding to a similar expression at the end of chapter xi.: "and none shall help him." The Powers of Europe have long pursued the policy, through mutual jealousy, of propping up the Power of Turkey, the present head of Mohammedanism. But when God has decreed that it shall fall, no help from earthly Powers can prevent it.

This leads us to the last point, namely, the *time* when this horn is to be broken. Daniel in his vision heard one angel say to another:—"How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, and the transgression that maketh desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" The answer was, "Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (verses 13, 14,

R.V.). The peculiar phrase, "evening and morning," which occurs six times in Genesis i., was a form of expression familiar to the Hebrews, indicating a complete "night and day," which, taken together, constitute a day of 24 hours as ordinarily reckoned. These 2,300 days must be regarded as being used in the symbolic sense of *years*, consistently with the year-day system of interpreting these prophecies, which has previously been explained. We gather therefore from these words, that the whole range of events contemplated in this vision would have for its characteristic period a course of 2,300 years, and "then," we are told, "shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

As the sanctuary was the most holy spot in the Holy Land, so in this prophecy it is figuratively spoken of as representing that land, and the worship of the true God carried on there. Thus the "sanctuary" and the "host" stand for God's land, and God's people. There may be included in the figurative meaning a reference to the professedly Christian Church and people of Eastern lands, but the fortunes of Daniel's people and their land constitute the main subject of the prophecy.

Regarded in this sense, the great restoration of the Jewish polity from the degradation and defilement inflicted by the power of Babylon, a restoration carried out by Ezra and Nehemiah under the sanction, and with the assistance, of the power of Persia, constituted a remarkable cleansing of the sanctuary. But since that epoch there have been great defilements and down-treadings of the Holy Land, such as those inflicted by Antiochus, and, on a greater scale, by the Romans after the destruction of Jerusalem, and, for a still longer period lasting to the present day, by the Mohammedan Power, in the capture of the Holy City by Caliph Omar, and the erection of the Mosque of Omar upon the site of the Temple. This prophecy of the 2,300 years to the cleansing of the sanctuary foretells, that at the close of that long period, a final restoration and deliverance of the Holy Land and its people from this, its last great defilement and down-treading by the Mohammedan Power, will take place. Each step in the downfall of Turkey is a step towards that final cleansing. Like the drying-up of the Euphrates, in Revelation xvi., this prophecy indicates the exhaustion of the Turkish Power, and points to a time when that blighting rule may be expected to be removed from the Holy Land. After this will follow that completion of the cleansing of the sanctuary, and of the restoration of the Hebrew nation, which will be brought about at the close of this dispensation in connection with the Lord's return.

These considerations will help us to form a judgment concerning the beginning and ending of the 2,300 years. The starting point, indeed, is not clearly indicated, the emphasis being rather on the great event with which it will close. But, as Elliott and Guinness point out, we may conclude that the beginning may naturally be looked for in the *opening period of the vision*, namely, during the career of the Ram, or Medo-Persian Empire; and the latter author shows good reason for accepting the restoration era, or cleansing of the sanctuary under Ezra and Nehemiah, of which we have spoken, as the starting point of the 2,300 years of the prophecy. Hence we see that this long period has a cleansing of the sanctuary both for its beginning and end, the former partial and transitory, the latter complete and lasting; whilst the general course

of the intervening time has been characterised by degradation and defilement. Moreover, Dr. Guinness points out that 2,300 years constitute a very remarkable and exact astronomic cycle, as shown by modern discovery, which could not have been then known by any human being; and the selection of it as the characteristic period of what is well named the Sanctuary Cycle, is one of the many proofs of the Divine inspiration of Scripture and of the omniscience of God.

If now we come to speak of dates, we must remember two points: first, that it is a part of the Historical system of interpretation, that the beginnings and endings of great Powers and long careers are often marked by *successive stages of rise and fall* respectively, rather than by one precise moment of time; secondly, that just as, in the contemplation of a wide and far-off landscape, distance throws a veil of indistinctness over the scene, and only the general outlines and broad features are impressed upon the vision; so, in these symbolic predictions, where the outlook of the seer reaches into the future, far distant from his own time, there is a veil of indistinctness in the description, and some of the details are given in mysterious terms which are capable of more than one application.[1] We must speak, therefore, with reserve and caution. If we cannot be sure of the precise time of the starting point, or of the close, of the 2,300 years, we may at least feel confidence as to the eras, or groups of events, which constitute the beginning and ending of that period. The true attitude of the student of prophecy with regard to future dates should be watchful anticipation, rather than dogmatic prediction.

Speaking broadly, then, we may say that the preliminary and typical cleansing of the sanctuary, begun by Ezra, and continued by Nehemiah, which occupied about 49 years, being the first 7 weeks of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks, as we have previously explained,[2] and constituting the restoration era, may be regarded as having been accomplished by about the beginning of the fourth century B.C. The interval between that time and the close of the present century is 2,300 years, the very period indicated in the prophecy we are considering. If, therefore, the interpretation given above be correct, we

[1] This accounts for some divergence of opinion amongst Historical interpreters. Thus Elliott, for instance, would limit the application of the Little Horn of this chapter to the career of the *Turkish* headship of Mohammedanism, not including the previous spread of that religion under the rule of the Saracens. But the marked parallelism between the disastrous career of the Little Horn of the Papacy and that of Mohammedanism, the one in the West, the other in the East, each rising about the same time, each a Power persecuting in the name of a corrupt religion, points to the interpretation given above as being the true one. Birks, on the other hand, advocates the application of the symbol to the Eastern Empire of Rome. But the fact that the prophecy represents this Little Horn as rising out of a horn, or kingdom, of a Beast that symbolised the *third* or Greek Empire, and not the *fourth* or Roman Empire, besides other considerations that have come before us, seems fatal to this view. The interpretation given above is that most generally adopted by Historical interpreters, and will, we think, commend itself to the judgment of our readers. As to the fulfilment in Antiochus Epiphanes, which some have advocated, an examination of the terms of the prophecy precludes the idea that this could have been the true fulfilment of it. At the same time we may admit that the mad and wicked career of this monarch was a remarkable type, and illustration on a small scale, both of the Little Horn of the Papacy in Daniel vii., and of the Mohammedan Little Horn in Daniel viii.

[2] See page 35.

may not unreasonably look for some remarkable step about that time in the downfall of the defiling Power of Mohammedanism, which at present treads under foot the Holy Land. And this may set in motion the train of events that will ultimately lead up to the accomplishment of the complete and lasting cleansing of the sanctuary, of which we have spoken.[1]

It will readily occur to most thinking minds that the present trend of political events in the East seems, in a remarkable degree, to point towards the same anticipation. The recent wholesale atrocities perpetrated upon the Christians in Armenia may be an indication that the transgression "has come to the full," and that the Power of Turkey, the present head of Mohammedanism, will before long come into judgment for its career of corruption, misrule, and fanatical cruelty, perpetrated under the guise of a false religion. We may not predict, but prophetic Scriptures lead us to be on the watch.

[1] A more exact chronological examination into the commencing and concluding times of the 2,300 years, including solar and lunar measurements, may be found in chapter xii. of Dr. Guinness' interesting work, *Light for the Last Days*.

APPENDIX B

"*THE LAST PROPHECY OF DANIEL*"

CHAP. xi. 36—xii. 5

[*The following paper was read by the Author at the half-yearly meeting of the Prophecy Investigation Society, held on April 13th, 1894.*]

BEFORE entering upon an examination of the difficult and obscure passage of Scripture which forms the subject of our consideration, it is necessary briefly to glance at the previous portion of the prophecy. Only by a survey of the whole can the several parts be seen in their proper perspective, and events be assigned to their proper place in history.

In far-reaching apocalyptic prophecies of the future, like that of the *Image*, of the *Four Beasts*, the *present prophecy* in Daniel, and the *Revelation* given to St. John, the prophet, or seer, gazes on a landscape, so to speak, spread out before him, in which his attention is directed to the more prominent objects, First he sees those immediately in the foreground. Then his eye wanders on to the middle distance of the prophetic landscape, and he sees, as it were, one hill-top rising after another, till at last his gaze rests on the far-distant mountain range that bounds his vision on the horizon, and forms the background of the scene.

In the vision of Daniel which we are considering, the angel at the outset briefly announces to him, first the *main subject* of the whole prophecy, and then the *range of time* over which it extends. He says, in chap. x. 14, "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for the vision is yet for many days."

The *main subject* of the prophecy, therefore, is *the fortunes of the Jewish nation*, ever a prominent topic with Hebrew prophets, other nations being noticed especially with reference to *them*.

Then, as to the *duration of time* over which the vision ranges, it is here described as "the latter days," and "for many days"; meaning, as we shall show, *the whole range* of the future from the time of the prophet to the manifestation of the Messiah, and even beyond that, in the extreme distance, to the beginning of the eternal kingdom at the end of the Messiah's reign.

It is necessary to explain this meaning of "the latter days," as that phrase is sometimes misunderstood, and limited to the time in immediate connection with the coming of Christ. Prof. Cheyne, in his commentary on Isaiah, enters into a careful examination of the phrase. He shows that it literally means "in the sequel of days," "in the time to come," or, as we say, "hereafter." In the Old Testament the expression only occurs in prophecies, and

as the Messianic era was the great subject of the future on which the prophets loved to dwell, it was often used with special reference to that era. But in far-reaching prophecies, like the present one in Daniel, the hereafter begins with the time near at hand to the prophet, and extends through intervening ages up to that culminating point. The phrase occurs in the celebrated prophecy of Jacob to his sons (Gen. xlix. 1), and in the *Speaker's Commentary* it is shown that the occupation of Canaan by the twelve tribes under Joshua is the point of time from which that prophecy starts, while it clearly extends to the Messianic era.

This meaning of "the latter days," namely as denoting "hereafter," in a wide or general sense, is fixed in Daniel by its employment in the vision of the image. We read in Daniel ii. 28, "God maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days," which is explained in verse 29, as "what should come to pass hereafter"; and the interpretation of the vision of the Image, as well as that of the corresponding vision of the Beasts, shows clearly that the "hereafter" begins with the time of the prophet, and reaches to the coming of Christ, and to His Millennial kingdom.

So, therefore, in this prophecy concerning the *latter days*, or the *hereafter*, in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, which we are considering, the angel briefly sketches the rise of one rule after another affecting the condition of the Hebrew race, beginning with the time of Cyrus, in which Daniel was then living, and extending over the whole range of history, till that final crisis is reached, at the beginning of the twelfth chapter, which is at once the crisis of their tribulation, and of their deliverance.

What we have to do in order to understand the picture, is to identify the various points of the prophetic landscape as they rise into view one after the other; in other words, to determine the prominent personages, and powers, and events in the course of history affecting the Hebrew nation, which are here unfolded before us.

The earlier portion of the prophecy, reaching from the first verse of chap. xi. to the end of verse 30, constitutes the foreground of the picture, so to speak. From that point the picture begins to blend into the middle distance which extends to the close of verse 39, and then we enter upon the extreme distance of the time of the end.

As in gazing on a landscape we see the nearer objects distinctly, so here the first portion, constituting the foreground, as we have said, of the prophetic view, is tolerably clear and well defined. All are pretty much agreed that it contains a fuller revelation, than had been previously given, of the trials and conflicts through which the Jews would have to pass during the rule of the Syrian and Egyptian kings.

The prophecy begins, verse 2, at the time when the Persian Empire was in power, and, as we learn from the previous chapter, dates from the third year of Cyrus. It just touches on the wealthy and prosperous Xerxes, the fourth after him. Then, in verse 3 it passes over an interval of 150 years to the next conspicuous king requiring notice, Alexander the Great, who overthrew the Medo-Persian Empire. At this point, therefore, namely, at verse 3, we must note that there is a transition from the second Beast, or world-empire of

Persia, to the third Beast, or world-empire of *Greece*, though the transition is simply marked by the words, "And a mighty king shall stand up." But this is only in accordance with the method of prophecy. What is clearly revealed in one place is often omitted, or barely noticed, in another; and the overthrow of the Medo-Persian Empire by Alexander of Greece had been more particularly foreshadowed in the former vision of chapter viii.

Next, in verses 5 and 6, the vision draws attention to two only out of the four subordinate kingdoms into which the Grecian imperial rule of Alexander became subdivided at his death, namely, that of the Ptolemies in Egypt, and that of the Seleucidæ in Syria, these two kingdoms being those by which the fortunes of the Jews were to be chiefly affected; and from their position relatively to Palestine, they are spoken of as the King of the North, and the King of the South, respectively.

Then follows a long and complicated description, extending as far as verse 30, of the rivalries and wars between these two dynasties, in the course of which the Jews were constantly the sufferers, the situation of their country placing them between two fires, so to speak, as the contending armies passed to and fro.

The annals of history enable us to identify with more or less certainty the details of this part of the prophecy.

The career of Antiochus the Great, and of Antiochus Epiphanes, are selected for special notice, the former extending from verse 10 to verse 19, the latter from verse 20 to verse 30.

So far, then, all seems pretty clear. We now approach that part of the picture where the foreground begins to blend into the middle distance, and accordingly there is something of indistinctness.

We have seen that the prophecy began with the world-empire of *Persia*, that it passed at verse 3 to that of *Greece*, and now, at verse 31, the *Roman* world-empire begins to come into view, and lasts, in accordance with the previous visions of the Image and the Beasts, right on to the end of this dispensation.

In the previous verse (verse 30), we catch a glimpse of the rising power of Rome, in the allusion to "the ships of Kittim" which, as history tells us, conveyed the Roman ambassadors who turned back the power of Antiochus Epiphanes, just when he was hoping to complete the subjugation of Egypt.

Kittim is admitted to mean Cyprus, as shown by Sayce, and other experts. In this prophecy, as in the more ancient one of Balaam,[1] the allusion under the term Kittim is to the power of the Romans. It was so interpreted by Rabbinical scholars, and also by Jerome. Bevan, in his commentary on Daniel, shows that the Jews used the term Kittim for all the Western maritime countries. Accordingly, as Syria is called King of the North, and Egypt King of the South, in relation to Palestine, so Kittim, or Cyprus, on the West, stands for the Great Power of the *West*, the Power of Rome. And so we see that it is at this point that the world-empire of Rome comes into view, and continues in view till the end.

[1] Numbers xxiv. 24:—"But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, and they shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also [the power of Kittim] shall come to destruction."

The following verses, 31–35, may be regarded as a transitionary portion of the prophecy. In it the foreground blends into the middle distance of the picture, and the power of Antiochus passes into that of Rome.

As, at verse 3, the transition from the second to the third Beast, the world-empire of Greece was simple marked by the words "and a mighty king shall stand up"; so, at verse 31, the transition from the third to the fourth Beast, the world-empire of Rome, is only indistinctly indicated by the words "and from him arms shall stand up," for such is the literal rendering of the Hebrew, though various meanings are given by various interpreters. The "arms" spoken of are the arms of the human body; and the raising up of arms is the symbol of a Power or Empire rising up into prominence, just as the hanging down of arms is a symbol of lapsing into weakness. Rome's dictation of terms to Antiochus, and the conquest of Macedon in the same year, were the beginning of her rising into supreme power as the fourth world-empire; a position which was completed about a century later. And thus "from him," *i.e.*, from, or after Antiochus, "arms," *i.e.*, the arms of the Power from Kittim, the Power of the Romans, began to "stand up," and to occupy a supreme position.[1]

This rise of the Roman Power brought on the subjugation of the Jews, and acts of desecration of their Temple, by Pompey, Crassus, and others, till at last these acts culminated in the "abomination that maketh desolate," spoken of in this verse, at the hands of Titus. Our Lord's reference in His prophecy on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv. 15, compared with Luke xxi. 20), to the desecration and desolation of the Jewish Temple and worship, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, as being the time of the fulfilment of the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet," confirms the application of this passage to the power of the Romans, and to the sufferings of the Jews at their hands. Therefore, if the desecration by Antiochus be included, as many hold it to be, in the meaning of this prophecy, it can only be as a preliminary and partial fulfilment.

The following verses, 32–35, briefly sketch events in the Roman Empire, up to the rise of the self-deifying king, the prophecy still referring more especially to the fortunes of the Jews, who, after the destruction of Jerusalem, were scattered in various parts of the empire. We read, in verse 32, how some did wickedly against the covenant, referring to those who rejected their Messiah, while others "knew their God," and so, together with Gentile Christians, fell, as is indicated in verse 33, under the cruelties of Pagan persecution. Then, in verse 34, the prophecy indicates how, by the conversion of the Roman Empire to nominal Christianity, they would be "holpen with a little help," while many would be induced by the apparent prosperity of Christianity to join the Church simply as insincere professors. In verse 35 an anticipatory glance is taken onwards to the time of the end, showing that persecution of the truth would last even till then.

Now we come to the rise of the self-deifying king in verse 36. At this point Antiochus, if indeed he is included in the description of the "abomination

[1] Jerome, as we have said, and the Jewish Rabbis of his time, thus interpreted this passage, and this view is maintained by Sir I. Newton, Profs. Murphy, Elliot, Birks, and other scholars.

of desolation," which we have said may be possible, completely fades from view, and the world-empire of Rome alone remains as the chief agent in the rest of the prophecy. There is evidently here another mark of transition. We have just noticed the rise of the Roman Power in verse 31, then the destruction of Jerusalem, the Pagan persecutions, and the conversion of the Roman world-empire to Christianity. And now, in "the king" of verse 36, a *new head* of that Roman Empire rises into view. It should be particularly noticed that his career was evidently to be a long one, for we are told that he was to "prosper till the indignation be accomplished." Prof. Birks has shown, by a comparison of scriptures,[1] that "the indignation" here spoken of means God's wrath against His own rebellious people, His dealings with them in chastisement. It corresponds to the "breaking in pieces the power of the holy people," spoken of in the next chapter, and the treading down of Jerusalem, foretold by our Lord. Accordingly the long career of this king, or head, over the Roman Empire, was to last till the time mentioned at the close of this prophecy, when, after the final great tribulation, in which the Jews, as we read in chapter xxi. 1, would be special sufferers, the time would come for the indignation to be accomplished, and for the Deliverer of Daniel's people to appear.

It now remains to try and find out what Power is meant by this self-deifying king. Students of Daniel do not require to be told that the word "king" is sometimes used for some one individual king, as Alexander, for instance, and sometimes for a "kingdom," that is, a power such as that of Rome, headed up by a succession of kings or rulers, and lasting over many centuries.[2]

If therefore we want to find out what is meant by this "king," it is obvious that, since Daniel speaks in this prophecy of the same succession of world-empires which formed the subject of previous prophecies, we must place this part of the prophecy, which relates to the fourth or Roman world-empire, alongside of his previous prophecies of that empire, and if we find in each case a similar remarkable Power described as rising up in the course of that empire, we may know that the *same* Power is being described. Now if we place the picture of the remarkable Power here described, in verses 36–39, alongside of the description of a similar power in the time of Daniel's Fourth Beast, namely, that of the "little horn" of Daniel vii., and compare it with St. Paul's description of the Man of Sin, and with the Beast in the Revelation, we shall find the doings and characteristics to correspond in such a remarkable manner, that we can have no reasonable doubt that they all refer to the same Power. Indeed, it is generally admitted that the Power here described in obscure and mysterious terms, is the same as that portrayed in those other passages of Scripture, and is the Power commonly called the Antichrist.

It is a standing rule in prophetical interpretation to explain the more obscure by the more distinct, and it is obvious that this portion of Daniel xi., verses 36 to 39, is one of the most obscure prophecies. The variety of interpretations gathered round the several words and clauses is enough to convince any one of this fact. The *proof* therefore that the Papal Power is what is here portrayed,

[1] Zech. i. 12; Isa. x. 24, 25; xii. 1; Luke xxi. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 16; Dan. viii. 12, 19; xii. 7.

[2] See Daniel viii. 21, and compare what has been said on page 181.

is to be sought in those other corresponding prophecies of the same Power, where the features are more distinct. This proof I brought forward in a former paper read before the Society, when, in discussing the 8th head of the Beast in the Revelation, I endeavoured to show that the Antichrist means the Papacy, from the various descriptions of that Power in Scripture, and especially from the remarkable prophecy in 2 Thessalonians ii., that after the removal of a *hindrance*, thus mysteriously alluded to by St. Paul, because he dared not speak more plainly, and meaning the rule of the Pagan Cæsars at Rome, the Antichrist was to rise up. I showed that after the hindrance of the Cæsars was "taken out of the way," and they were removed to Constantinople, the Pope *did* rise up into power at Rome, thus proving himself to be the Antichrist of prophecy that was then to be revealed. And this argument I showed to be confirmed by the testimony of the early Church, the testimony of historians, and the testimony of the Pope himself.[1]

It is only necessary here, therefore, to point out that the present description, in Daniel xi. 36–39, which as we have said is very generally admitted to relate to the Antichrist, reveals details which find their counterpart in the Papacy.

In Apocalyptic prophecies, it is usual that the later ones concerning the same subject, whilst containing much that has previously been revealed (showing the identity of the subject), should also bring to light further characteristics of that subject. Accordingly, we shall see that it is so here.

In the opening description of verse 36, there is just the same character portrayed, as in the picture of "the little horn" of the Papacy in Daniel vii.. —the same self-exaltation above other gods, or objects of reverence ("he shall magnify himself above every god"), and the same blasphemy, or speaking "marvellous things against the God of gods," not the open blasphemy of an infidel, as some would explain it, but blasphemy as the Jews understood the term, namely, the laying claim to attributes that belong to God alone.

In verse 37, as in other prophecies of the same Power, stress is laid upon the fact, that this new "king," or representative of the Roman world-empire, would exhibit a *new* religion, different from all that had preceded, "neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers." If we take the mysterious characteristic of disregard of "the desire of women," to refer to the well-known Papal exaltation of the state of celibacy, a feature noted by St. Paul in writing to Timothy, the fulfilment is obvious. Or if, as others think, it is to be taken as referring to Christ, as the "desire" of Hebrew women, the fulfilment is equally clear, since it is a marked characteristic of the Papacy that it deposes Christ from His proper place, and supersedes Him by other objects of veneration, especially the Virgin Mary. Or if the expression refers to some heathen deity, as others explain it, this also would be true of the Papacy.

Again it is said, "he exalts himself above all." It has been well observed by Birks and others, that a man who not only claims for himself, but also to delegate to others, the power to pardon sins, to remove out of Purgatory whom he will, and in the ceremony of the Mass to manufacture the Deity which he adores, fulfils every element of the description.

[1] The paper above alluded to is, of course, that which has formed the basis of the previous portion of the present volume, which deals with that subject.

But in verses 38, 39, we enter upon a revelation of a further remarkable characteristic, which should distinguish this last headship of the Roman world-empire. In mysterious phrases the prophecy shows that a new feature of religious worship was to be made prominent by this Power, and that was, *the honouring of the god of fortresses*, as the R.V. literally renders the expression. As to what is meant by the mysterious allusions in these verses to *worship* in connection with *fortresses*, there is a perfect *Babel* of translations and interpretations by various scholars, so that dogmatism is precluded. But Sir I. Newton, Birks, Elliott, and other most able interpreters have shown that the allusion is to *saint-worship*; that the term *Mahuzzim* or *fortresses* means guardian deities, or tutelary saints, who receive worship as protectors—as defences and fortresses—from their votaries.[1]

The idea is common in Hebrew religious poetry. The Psalmist speaks of God as "my fortress," even as we call Christ our "Rock of Ages." If this be so, we have here set forth, in mysterious language and with emphatic repetition, a further revelation of what was to constitute a most marked feature in the religion of this self-exalting king; and that feature remains to the present day one of the most striking characteristics of the Papacy. Wherever the Papal religion is manifested in its true colours, there are to be seen multitudes of shrines to *tutelary saints*, and chief among them to the Virgin Mary, honoured, exactly as the prediction says in verse 38, "with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things."

And here we must note, since this prophecy was specially to concern Daniel's people, that just as the Pagan power of Rome wrought terrible mischief upon the fortunes of the Jewish race, affecting them both temporally and spiritually, so also the Papal power of Rome has done. After the destruction of the Temple and its worship, Daniel's people then resident in Palestine were scattered, and from that time have been largely located in the regions of Christendom, and here the iron heel of Rome has crushed them down. Gibbon and other historians have recounted the fearful cruelties and robberies, and murders perpetrated in the name of Christianity upon this ill-fated race. As Prof. Birks well says, "the indignation" against the people of which this prophecy speaks was not accomplished when the Romans sacked Jerusalem, for Papal Rome learned to rival or surpass the severity of those heathen warriors who laid the Temple in ruins.[2] Gibbon tells us how in the seventh century 90,000 Jews were compelled to receive the sacrament of Baptism, and how, age after age, in Italy, Spain, and other countries of Christendom, they were robbed or tortured, or put to death, in the name of that caricature of Christianity, of which the Pope was the head and inspiring power.

What is it that now more than anything else maintains the poor Jews in their hardness of heart and blindness to the truth, but these very cruelties, perpetrated by those who professed the spurious Christianity taught by Rome? It is just this feature of Roman Christianity, and its offshoot and

[1] The word is used, in a literal sense, in verses 9 and 10. It is applied in a figurative sense to the Temple, in verse 31. And here it is used of the deity who constitutes the protecting power of the shrine or sanctuary.

[2] T. R. Birks, *Two Later Visions of Daniel*, page 289.

counterpart, the Greek Church of Russia, together with that other striking feature of them both, their gross idolatry, that still continues to make the Jew hate the very name of Christian. In a prophecy professing to foretell the fortunes of Daniel's people, such a terrible power as this, under which they have suffered both temporally and spiritually for long centuries, could not possibly have been omitted.

Thus, in harmony with Daniel's previous prophecy of the Fourth Beast, we have in these verses (verses 36–39), in the very place where we should expect to find it, a description given of that tremendous power of evil which forms the subject of so many prophecies, namely, the Papal Power, which has run its foretold career of prosperity lasting 1,260 years, and has now entered upon its period of consumption, the epoch of the end.

It is just this epoch of the end which forms the subject of the remaining portion of the prophecy we are considering. At verse 40 we have obviously another mark of transition in the words, "and at the time of the end."

Here, therefore, we enter upon the extreme distance of the picture, the far horizon that bounded the prophet's view. We pass from the time now present to that which is future.

The "time of the end" may either be taken as that epoch which, as we have said, began when the 1,260 years of Papal prospering ran out in 1870, and will last till the final establishment of Messiah's kingdom; or it may be taken in a less definite sense, as simply denoting the closing years of this dispensation. In the former case the mysterious additional periods of 30 and 45 prophetic days (*i.e.* years) spoken of at the close of Dan. xii., would date from 1870, and the coming of Christ might take place, either at the marked break at the end of the 30 years, leaving the 45 for the complete establishment of His kingdom,—or at the very end of both the additional periods. These are mysteries over which a veil of uncertainty is thrown which we do well to respect, simply waiting in the attitude of watchfulness.[1]

In this time of the end, then, and just before Christ, the Deliverer of the Jews, returns to reign, we have again presented to view, as in a previous portion of the chapter, a King of the North and a King of the South, two opposing Powers, in whose struggle the fortunes of the Jews are vitally affected. But after the long course of history that has been described, the application of these expressions has become changed, and they now refer to two other Powers. Prof. Birks thinks that the King of the North here spoken of is the same great Power which has just before been described, the persecuting, the self-willed, self-exalting and idol-promoting Power of Rome, represented by its last head,—the same Power which, as the Beast in the Revelation, together with the subservient power of the False Prophet, or Romish clergy, is spoken of as being the chief agent in bringing about this final war. Others think that Russia is meant.

In the detailed prophecy of Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., we have a remarkable description of this final general war, which Scripture calls the war of nations, or of Armageddon. In Ezekiel's description, according to some of our ablest expositors, *Russia*, the great Power of the North with respect to Palestine,—

[1] Compare what has been said on these mysterious periods on page 256.

one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, military Power of the present day—seems to be foretold as the chief military agent of the Northern confederacy, as Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. These names, as Prof. Sayce has shown, indicate nations which lived, in the time of Ezekiel, to the extreme North of Palestine, in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea and Caucasus. They therefore fitly prefigured modern Russia. And Gog is a dynastic title for their ruler.[1]

Some, however, think that Gog in Ezekiel means the Papal Power, the same as "the prince" in these verses of Daniel, Russia being indicated by Ezekiel only as a chief ally, together with other European descendants of Japheth.

One thing at any rate seems clear, and that is, that the two chief Powers in this Northern confederacy, foreshadowed in these prophecies, are the *Papal Power* and *Russia*.

Now when we compare these prophetical anticipations with the political and religious outlook of the times in which we are living,—the times of the end, as so many of us believe them to be,—we do seem to see a remarkable confirmation of what was thus predicted more than 2,000 years ago.

We know, as a matter of fact, that the Papal Power, or Beast of Revelation, is the only form of Roman world-empire now in existence, the only Power which makes any such claim, and that it has never for a moment relinquished the idea of recovering its former *prestige*. The following quotation from an article in one of our principal newspapers, is in fact a matter of commonplace observation, namely, that "the dream of the Restoration of the Temporal Power is one of the chief disturbing forces in Europe, and one of the greatest dangers of the future." On the other hand we know that Russia, as the clear-sighted Napoleon foresaw and announced, aspires to political supremacy in the world, and we know further that for many years it has been her determination, in furtherance of these political views, to obtain possession of Constantinople, and of Palestine, as the most important strategical positions for that purpose.

May it not be, therefore, that these two Powers, already united by the sympathy of an equally corrupt and, in essential points, identical religion, will in the time of the end coalesce in order to carry out their respective objects of ambition, the one to obtain *political*, the other *religious* supremacy in the world?

Thus the Papal Power in alliance with Russia would be what is spoken of in this passage of Daniel as King of the North, the Papal Power being the inspiring spirit, whilst Russia was the chief military agent.

If this be so, then we can understand how it is that the detailed descriptions of the military operations given in Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., bring before us more prominently *Russia*, as the acting military head of the Northern confederacy; whilst in the Revelation of St. John, which is more especially concerned with the history of the Fourth Beast, or Roman Empire, under its last form, namely, that of the Papacy, prominence is given to this latter Power

[1] Compare what has been said on the war of Armageddon, and the King of the North and of the South, pages 207, 214, 412.

in connection with the final war, as being the prime originator of it. And, since this war is to end in the utter destruction of the Papacy, this was figured to St. John in vision by his seeing the monster forms of the Beast and of the False Prophet, symbolising the power of the Pope and of the body of his clergy, cast into the lake of fire.

As to the King of the South, it has been previously explained, that in all probability the power of Great Britain, prefigured in Ezekiel under the name of Tarshish, which in ancient times represented commercial and naval pre-eminence, is here foretold as the head of the Southern confederacy; and that by "*Tarshish*, with all the young lions thereof," of which Ezekiel speaks as composing that confederacy, united action by England and her Colonies is foreshadowed. Prophecy and politics equally point to this as a probability of the future. A scheme to promote the federation of the Colonies with the mother country is under consideration by British statesmen, and awaits development. Attention has been drawn to the remarkable forecast of Birks some fifty years ago, derived from these prophecies, that England would at the time of the end be in occupation of Egypt. When he wrote, there was no indication whatever of this being fulfilled. Now, everything points to it.[1]

In verse 40, the Northern Power is spoken of as having "many ships." Russia is rapidly building more war vessels. And if France, which has been called by Rome the "eldest son of the Church," is also on the side of Russia, as is now, and will probably then be the case, we can see how remarkably their united navies would fulfil this part of the prediction. It is already on the *tapis* that Russia, to please France, or to carry out her own projects in the East, may one day try to interfere with England in Egypt. It is in harmony with this, probably, that in verses 41, 42, the prophecy tells us how the armies of the North will sweep through Palestine and make direct for Egypt, passing by the more inaccessible territories of Edom and Moab: how they will be victorious over the Southern or British confederacy in Egypt: how a check in the East and North, possibly a counter-attack threatened by England from the direction of India, or in Palestine itself, will cause the Northern invader to prepare for a final effort, with his headquarters in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. Zechariah tells us that Jerusalem will then be besieged and taken. And from that prophecy, as well as from this, and also from the nineteenth of Revelation, we learn that at that crisis the Lord Jesus, accompanied by His saints, will descend from heaven as the Deliverer of His people, and will annihilate the Northern hosts.

There is only space to glance for a moment at the first five verses of Daniel xii. As, on the extreme limit of the horizon, several ranges of hills melt into one blue line, and it needs a nearer inspection to determine their relative position and the distances between them, so here the prophecy, relating to events in the furthest distance, groups together the final Jewish tribulation, the Divine deliverance, and the resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust, as if all were to take place at one and the same great crisis. But, from the nearer standpoint which is given us in later and fuller revelations on these subjects, we are able more accurately to define the order of events. And from these

[1] See page 208.

other Scriptures we may gather, that the first resurrection, or resurrection of the first-fruits, will be a selection from amongst the dead, as indeed is here hinted ; that Christ will raise these from the dead *before* the Great Tribulation, of which the Jewish tribulation here spoken of will form a part ; that He will be accompanied by the saints thus previously raised, when He comes at the crisis before mentioned, to destroy the hosts round Jerusalem, and to set up His kingdom there, and over the world ; and that only at the end of His Millennial reign will the rest of the dead be raised, at the second resurrection, and that then, as we read in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, the general judgment will take place, and all those, whose names are not then found written in the Book of Life, will be cast into the lake of fire.

Thus, as we have said, this wonderful and mysterious prophecy of Daniel touches on the successive rise of various Powers, affecting the condition of the Jews, all down through the ages, from the times of the prophet to the coming of the Messiah, and, in the faint reference to the second resurrection, even points on to the confines of eternity.

APPENDIX C

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THE PAPACY AND THE HEADSHIP OF THE CÆSARS

The following interesting illustration of the Papal headship being the revival of the headship of the Cæsars at Rome, in a new form, was communicated to me by the late Rev. Henry E. Brooke. He says :—"When I was at Rome in 1880, my attention was drawn to the subject by observing on some of the ancient monuments, not only the original name and date of the Emperor who had erected it, but also of the Pope who had restored it, and both bore the same title 'Pont. Max.' One I remember distinctly—the column of Trajan—on which it was curious to read, on opposite sides of the base of the column, the names and titles of the Emperor who erected it, and of the Pope who had restored it; and to read the title 'Pontifex Maximus,' as being, as it were, the connecting link between them."

We may add a few remarks from Canon Gore's recent volume, *Leo the Great*, pp. 22, 96, which illustrates the same point :—"As the Church succeeded to the vacant throne of Rome, so the old Roman spirit of government passed into the great rulers of the Church; the great command, 'Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,' might have been spoken to the Popes as well as to the Cæsars."

"The withdrawal of the seat of government and the Imperial residence from Rome left all the magnificent traditions of government and authority, all the splendid *prestige* of the Eternal City to centre round the head of the bishop of Rome, whose personality as the great Western representative of Christendom became constantly more important as Paganism was beaten under and died away, and as each emperor in turn was more contemptible than the last."

Thus we see that the headship of the Cæsars at Rome, which had received a deadly wound, was resuscitated in a new and ecclesiastical form in the Popes of Rome.

APPENDIX D

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ON THE TWO STAGES OF THE SECOND ADVENT

IN addition to what has already been said on the subject of the two stages of Christ's second advent, it may be well here to notice some objections that have been raised.

All students of prophecy are agreed that there will be two phases, or stages, of the Second Coming; namely, that coming into the air *for* His saints which forms the special revelation given by St. Paul at the close of his first epistle to the Thessalonians, and that coming *with* His saints which is more particularly foretold in Revelation xix. The question, about which there exists a difference of opinion, is as to whether there is a *time-interval* between these two phases. We have endeavoured to show from Scripture, that according to the indications thrown out upon this mysterious subject, in the teaching of our Lord and of St. Paul, there *will* be a time-interval, during which at least the most *accentuated* portion of the Great Tribulation, at the close of this dispensation, will take place.

(1) This view has been objected to as if it rested solely upon arguments from analogy. But this is not so. We have endeavoured to show that it rests upon legitimate inferences from direct statements on the subject in Scripture. It is true that it is strongly *confirmed* by arguments from analogy, and this is just the great value of that kind of evidence.

(2) It has been said that Old Testament Scriptures ought not to be brought into the question. But surely, in such a dark and difficult subject as prophecy, we ought to make use of *all* the light that Scripture throws upon it, in order rightly to discern its details. The Psalms and the prophets abound with Millennial information. The passage in Isaiah xxvi. 20, 21, for instance, whatever its primary application, certainly has an analogical bearing upon the question, and may well be understood as having a direct reference to it[1]:—"Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

(3) Again, it is urged that no mention of there being two stages in the coming of Christ is to be found in the early Christian writers, and that this interpretation of Scripture was never heard of till the present century; more-

[1] Birks distinctly upholds this interpretation. See his *Commentary on Isaiah*.

over, it is said, that it was first put forward by a Futurist writer, and is an outcome of the Futurist system.

But to this the answer seems obvious. The notices of the Second Advent amongst the early writers are very brief and fragmentary. No detailed examination into the exact order of the events connected with that crisis exists. Indeed, we have no means of ascertaining how the teaching of our Lord and of St. Paul upon this point was understood amongst them. We know, from 2 Thessalonians i., ii., that there were some amongst the Christians of Thessalonica who erroneously supposed that they were living in the period when "the day of the Lord" [see pages 294, 420] was "now present" (2 Thess. ii. 2). And they expected the speedy manifestation of Christ openly before the world to sweep away His enemies. But the tenor of St. Paul's letter seems to be that they were in error, both because the first event of the coming, namely, "our gathering together unto him" (2 Thess. ii. 1) had not taken place, and, further, that before He would come in judgment to overthrow His enemies, His great enemy, the Antichrist, must be revealed.

We know that from the first it has ever been Satan's object to introduce error and confusion into all that concerns the doctrine of our Lord's second coming, and confusion and obscurity soon settled down upon much that concerned that glorious event. No wonder therefore if on this point we can gather no light from early writings. We have noted in our Introduction how prophetic study revived at the Reformation. About fifty or sixty years ago more especially, there was a great searching into the prophetical Scriptures by Bible students. Attention was particularly drawn to the doctrine of the two stages in the second coming of Christ. This view is certainly not necessarily linked with Futurism; it equally harmonises with the Historical view which we maintain. It cannot be proved that attention to this important detail was first revived in these latter days amongst Futurists. But, even were it so, it is surely obvious that the real question for us is, not whether Futurists were prominent in drawing attention to this point, but whether or not there are Scriptural grounds for maintaining this view. That it has been brought into prominence in comparatively recent times can be no true objection, since prophecy, as all acknowledge, is a *progressive* study, one writer after another profiting by the errors or omissions of predecessors, and bringing fresh light to bear upon the subject.

(4) Sometimes it is urged as an objection that the Second Advent is constantly spoken of in the New Testament as *one event*. But to this the reply is obvious. The coming of Christ was constantly foretold in the *Old* Testament as one event, yet that great event was to include two stages separated by an interval of many centuries, the coming in humiliation and the coming in glory. So, too, we refer to the First Advent as one event, though there were two marked stages, His coming in infancy, and His coming forth in His official character. Therefore, also, we may speak of Christ's Second Advent as one great event, though it will be marked by two stages.

We have already referred to the words of our Lord, in His prophecy on the Mount of Olives, which constitute a remarkable confirmation of the view we advocate. It will be well to quote here the passage with its context. After having alluded to the calamities of the time of tribulation in which this dis-

pensation will close, our Lord adds: "But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all those that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke xxi. 34–36, R.V.). This passage, in conformity with other Scriptures which we have quoted, seems clearly to point to the fact that our Lord will first come *for* His saints, as described by St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians iv., and remove them, previous to the great tribulation, to a place of glory and safety, before He comes *with* them at the close of that calamitous period to overthrow His enemies, and openly set up His kingdom in this world. An endeavour has been made by some to evade the force of this passage, by explaining the word "escape" as if it meant to *pass through and come safely out of*. But this can hardly be maintained. In the only two other places in the New Testament where the word is employed, as here, in its transitive sense, it seems more natural to explain the word as we continually use it, namely, to *avoid*, or escape altogether. Thus, in 2 Corinthians xi. 32, St. Paul says: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes, in order to take me: and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands" (R.V.). The governor wanted to catch him, but St. Paul avoided his hands altogether. So, in the other passage, Rom. ii. 3, we read: "And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment [*i.e.* in the sense of condemnation] of God." Here it seems only natural to understand the expression in the same way as when we speak of escaping punishment, *i.e.* avoiding it altogether. If we turn now to our present passage the same meaning seems obvious. The whole tenor of our Lord's solemn exhortation to watchfulness, together with his comparison of the typical event of the Flood, seem clearly to imply that, whilst the world at large will be more or less involved in the calamities of the last days, the elect and faithful then found living will escape them by being previously removed to a place of safety. With this agree the remarkable words added in the corresponding passage of St. Matthew: "Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. Watch, therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh" (Matt. xxiv. 40–42, R.V.). Alford well points out, that in the expression "one shall be *taken*" the same word is employed as that used by our Lord in John xiv. 3, where He says to His disciples that He will come again and "receive" them to Himself, reference being made to that rapture of the saints which is more fully described by St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians iv. And our Lord's prophecy clearly implies that when the last tribulation sets in, some, the faithful and watchful, will be *taken* up out of harm's way, while others will be *left* to pass through that calamitous period.

In connection with this subject, attention should be drawn to the fact that both our Lord and St. Paul employ the same remarkable figure with reference to the time of tribulation in which this dispensation will end, namely, the travail of child-birth (compare Matt. xxiv. 8; 1 Thess. v. 3, R.V.). This

figure clearly denotes, not a point of time, but a period of uncertain duration beginning suddenly, and ending in a new birth. It thus aptly pictures the time of tribulation, "distress of nations and perplexity," which will close this dispensation, and result in "the regeneration," or new birth of the Millennial age. The rapture of the saints is immediately connected by St. Paul, in 1 Thess. iv., v., in conformity with the other Scriptures which we have mentioned, with the *beginning* of the time of tribulation, and whilst the faithful will thus, as our Lord says, "escape all these things that shall come to pass," St. Paul adds that the unwatchful and unready "shall in no wise escape."

We trust we have now given our readers sufficient scriptural evidence for the belief that the coming of Christ will be in two stages, first for, and then with, His saints, the final tribulation taking place between these two events, while the duration of the interval between the two stages is unrevealed. At the same time we would deprecate the spirit of dogmatism on the subject, always remembering that prophecy is but as "a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Peter i. 19). It is not sunlight. And though we may feel sure about main outlines, there may be points of detail with regard to which it may be more becoming to speak with reserve.

As to the possibility of Christ's coming at any time, about which we have previously spoken (pp. 259, 381) care must be taken not to confuse, as is often done, the two statements: (1) that the Church was intended to be *always expecting* Christ; (2) that Christ *might have come* at any time. These things are entirely different; and only the first statement is true. There was never any real question of Christ's return before a definite period, known to God, and still in the future. The Lord will come *at the appointed time*, not a moment before. It is only our uncertainty as to when that time shall be that keeps us expectant: and it was meant to. May we seek to live in the attitude of looking for, and longing for, the glorious event.

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